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[IN THE PRESENCE OF MILICENT.]

THE THREE VALENTINES OF VERNON GRANGE.

A STORY WITH A MORAL. IN THREE
CHAPTERS.
(FOR THE LONDON READER.)

CHAPTER II.

Four years have passed swiftly away. The bells in the old church-tower are ringing gaily. It is the first day of the merry month of May, and all Daisy-bourne is alive to the fact that there are two "out-asked couples to be united that morning in holy wedlock within the sacred fane where the old and young of the hamlet have from time beyond memory been christened, married, and buried. It turned out that there were three readings of the service, but as to who were the third wedded pair the reader must for a short time await the satisfaction of his curiosity.

Jonathan Brinsley had, as might have been expected from his character, returned to reclaim his promise, and right well, too, had Esther Langdale kept her part of the contract. Jonathan had prospered not rapidly, but steadily. The firm by which he was employed was just, but not remarkable for generosity. Nevertheless, the stipulated yearly advance had now raised his salary to such a sum as, with the known prudent frugality of Esther, warranted him in taking unto himself "the young man's best partner," a prudent wife. Esther Langdale, too, had not failed to provide, with well-placed trust, all those necessary household appliances, and even some elegancies, which make a modest home attractive, and when they returned to a small, newly-

built villa a mile out of Manchester, plainly and substantially furnished, Esther was as quietly pleased with her house as Jonathan Brinsley was with his new wife and her surroundings. But we are anticipating.

At a few minutes before ten a well-appointed glass coach, of an old-fashioned landau pattern, drawn by a tall pair of greys, drove up to Mrs. Langdale's door.

It contained the bridegroom and his best man—the son of Jonathan's Manchester employer.

The lads and lasses of the village had hardly time to admire the grand plated harness and the white satin rosettes of the horses' heads, and the bowpot nosegay of the coachman, before Esther Langdale and her mother came forth, fully dressed, and seated themselves in the vehicle, amid a small "hooray" from the smaller juveniles.

Presently another open carriage appeared. In this was already seated Esther's brother, and forth from the house issued two bridesmaids in white muslin and gay pink ribands, who were immediately recognised, the one as Esther's younger sister, the other as the sister of Jonathan Brinsley.

"Well, they do keep it all in the family," said a disappointed damsel, "but I daresay it's a saving—Esther was always stingy, and so they say is Jonathan Brinsley, for that matter, so they're well matched."

The carriages drove off, followed by a small, chattering crowd, and were met at the church-porch by a much larger assemblage.

For the information of the fair sex we must not omit to note that the bride wore a quaker-grey silk dress, chosen, like that of Mrs. Primrose, "not for its colour but because it would wear well," and perchance "dye" for the inheritance of some little juvenile Brinsley, should such arrive in due course. Her gloves were of a pale drab, her cuffs and collar, of the finest pillow-lace, would have indeed been

extravagant had they not been of Esther's own making, as also was the delicate and ample veil that fell over her white tulle bonnet, trimmed with the orthodox orange blossoms.

As they walked up the aisle the impartial observer must have confessed they were a handsome couple, though neither could lay claim to the attribute of beauty.

The strong, bony form, and square shoulders of Jonathan Brinsley, and his erect head, with a certain decision of feature that denoted firm purpose and perseverance, and his five feet ten of stature gave him a manly appearance, while the well-proportioned figure of Esther Langdale—she, too, being above the middle stature of women—with a self-possessed placidity of countenance, and her complexion heightened by a natural emotion, made her positively handsome. Indeed one or two of the older males among the spectators were heard to declare, to the displeasure of their wives and daughters, that "they had no idea that Esther Langdale was half so good-looking."

An opinion which in one case, that of a young lady who had herself "cast a sheep's eye" at Jonathan in vain, extorted an observation that she would not for the world have it said that she said so, but that she could almost swear that she could see the carnation on Esther's usually colourless cheek.

The ceremony proceeded decorously, the vicar reading with unusual distinctness that interesting service which begins with "Dearly beloved," and ends with "amazement," Jonathan and Esther joining audibly in the responses, when as the former complied with the rubrical direction of "taking the ring from the priest, to put it upon the fourth finger of the woman's left hand," Esther Langdale turned pale, trembled, and seemed almost overcome by sudden emotion. She, however, was quickly calm and self-possessed. But the incident was not lost on the sharp-sighted gossips of the village.

The formalities of the entries and signatures of witnesses over the wedding party departed, but to the great chagrin and disappointment of the villagers, instead of returning either to the house of the Brinsleys, of Mrs. Langdale, or to the Vernon Arms, the bridegroom having handed in the bride, gave the coachman a loud direction for "Villas, Longsight" (nobody caught the name), and away went the slapping pair of greys, and after them the second spacious coachful of the married party, and before Daisybourne, as there represented, had recovered from its astonishment, were clean out of sight on the high road to Manchester.

"Bang! Clang! Bang!" went the whole peal of bells in a broadside fire.

"Lor 'a mussy upon us!" exclaimed half-deaf old Rachel Green, "I do declare as I thought the French was come—"

Her voice was drowned in another trial at a simultaneous crash.

"Bang! Clang! Bang! Clang!"

We have already said that the bells were ringing merrily, but whatever they had been doing previously was nothing to the din and row that were now got out of the mellow old bell-metal, for Daisybourne boasted the most ancient, as well as the very best peal of twelve for more than as many miles round, and on this occasion the Daisybourne "ringers" were associated with the élite of the Yorkshire "College Youths," the Middleton Campanological Society, and some wonderful "tenor" from the Cathedral, in friendly rivalry. And why was this? Because the best cricketer, the captain of the Daisybourne eleven—who had, in the latest match with "the North," scored one hundred and fifteen and carried his bat out when nine wickets had fallen and one hundred and fourteen runs stood to the credit of the North—was going to be married. Then, too, the bridegroom had won "the married against the single" for the latter in the same way—"and," said the Benedicts, "he'll do it for our side this year."

Besides, who could run a mile, hop a hundred yards, throw a cricket ball, pick up a hundred eggs a yard apart and put them singly in a basket; in short who was there to compare in village green sports, who so welcome at every all fresco merrymaking as Robin Armstrong? and it was Robin Armstrong who was this day to be married to Dolly Westrop.

Hence the wondrous clangour of "firing," bob-majors, double bob-majors, and grandiose triples that jangled out of the old grey tower in most methodic uproar.

And now a truly rustic procession hove in sight. First came a dozen young fellows bare-headed, in very white shirt-sleeves, tied just above the elbow with a fillet and bow of bright blue worsted tape, and each carrying a basket-billed straight ash-stick, these represented the single-stick players of Daisybourne.

After these marched the village musicians, a wonderful "scratch pack," the first eight were drums, tabors, fifes and pipes, then came a clarinet, a keyed bugle, a French horn and a fiddle, and lastly a very big drum, carried by one fellow pick-a-back, and performed on by a strong-armed militiaman with a pair of leather-balled drumsticks, in a way that would make Mr. Chippendale stop his ears. What was wanting in time, tune and rhythm was however made up in noise, and as that seemed the principal aim of the performers they were certainly highly successful.

Then came a dozen damsels in gay woollen kirtles of any colour they chose, each bearing a branch of fragrant hawthorn, and wearing a home-made white straw hat, bearing much resemblance to the head-gear of the lost Gainsborough picture of the second Duchess of Devonshire, and, like that aristocratic beauty's tatch, trimmed with the blue riband, which seemed the prevailing colour of Robin Armstrong, seeing that Dolly, the bride, wore blue ribands at her breast, round her waist, and in her straw hat also.

As for Robin he looked rather awkward, for they had persuaded him to wear a bright blue braes buttoned coat, with shutter fronts and unmanageable lapels, which would fly open and disclose a glaring yellow waistcoat; a sky-blue silk scarf encircled his brown manly throat, and his round straw hat had been decorated by the maidens with blue and yellow rosettes in a way wonderful to behold. His nether bulk was encased in light drab cassimere breeches, with a bunch of silk strings at the knees, while his calves and feet, in spotless ribbed white cotton stockings and stout walking-shoes tied with an extra bunch of black gallow, displayed the active symmetry of his form. The rear of the procession consisted

of old men, matrons, maids, and all the children in the parish able to toddle, and thus they wound up the churchyard path and filed into the rustic porch, the bridal procession, the single-stick men, and musicians halting at the entrance on either side, so that the may-bearing maidens only preceded the smiling and happy pair up the nave to the chancel steps.

As to the campanological "youths" above their musical row was so persistent and overpowering that until the good-natured vicar had sent a third and strong-voiced remonstrant to "silence that dreadful bell," he could not get a chance of hearing anybody or even himself.

At length the clangour ceased, and the prolonged boom having died away, the crowd subsided into decorous gravity, interrupted only by an occasional titter sterily crushed by the awful look and the stentorian "silence!" called by the awful Bumble and town-crier of Daisybourne.

It was universally agreed by all the most experienced dames of Daisybourne, and their opinion was confirmed by the old parish clerk, that never did bride and bridegroom behave prettier throughout the marriage ceremony than Robin and Dolly Armstrong. In fact, old Mrs. Rachel Green declared "somebody must have schooled 'un, he did it as natural as if he'd bin used to be married once a week."

But the joy and surprise was doubled when Robin, coming out of the vestry, begged the lads and lasses, maids, wives, matrons and widows, all and sundry, to his "wedding feast."

"Yes," said he, cheerily, "come and drink Dolly's good health and mine, too, in the best home-brewed of Vernon Grange. There's enough for all and to spare, thanks to good Mrs. Bland! Follow me, friends, and we'll show you the way."

We will not attempt to describe the acclamation with which this was received. The bell-ringers broke out afresh, and well might their vigour be renewed; for during the interval of their silence a huge lump of roast beef, with mustard and vinegar and a dozen loaves, had been washed down by twelve quarts of brown October, also sent down from the Grange.

The procession, after a very poor attempt at formation, streamed along up the hard private road and the hundred yards of avenue of majestic beeches which led to the lawn of the Grange, and there stood a vast marquee, gay with flags on the outside, while within four long rows of plank tables on trestles, to use the penny-a-liner's phrase, "groined" beneath the substantial fare.

Mrs. Bland met Robin, Dolly, old Armstrong and the bridesmaids at the entrance of the marquee, and conducted them to a special cross-table at the upper end, where she herself did the honours.

The other guests were not long in ranging themselves by the well-planned board, under direction of the Vernon servants and household.

At six o'clock the bride and bridegroom bade the jovial party good-bye, and making their exit amid a shower of old slippers and peals of cheering and good wishes, were left to make their way to the honey-suckle-embowered lodge which, on this auspicious occasion, was presented to Robin Armstrong by the liberal Squire Vernon.

The evening closed in, and the gleeful gathering dispersed, and though there might have been a jokin or two who zigzagged a little in his way to his cottage, owing to the potency of the Vernon brewage, not one disorder or disagreeable marred the merry May Day of the marriage of Dolly Westrop and Robin Armstrong.

In the opening of this second chapter we spoke of a third marriage on the same morn. We will not keep the reader in further suspense.

It was noticed by a few of the tarry-behinds in the church that the vicar, the clerk and the beadle returned from the vestry to the communion rails, in evident expectation of "more grist to the mill" of matrimony.

They had not long to wait. In a far corner of the church in a pew screened by green curtains, sat a male and a female, accompanied by another man and a woman. Approaching the door of this pew, and opening it, Mr. Bumble, with his pole in hand, invited their forthcoming. As nearest to the door in the rather narrow enclosure, Mr. Wormwood, the seedy clerk of Mr. Sheepskin, the village-lawyer, came forth, followed by Mistress Grimshaw, often called "Miss Grim," about the eldest and sourest spinster of the neighbourhood.

These could not be the couple intending to perpetrate "the sin that they call matri-money," seeing that Wormwood had a shrewish wife and a mischievous boy who claimed him for father. But the murder was soon out.

Arrayed in a plain blue frock-coat, with a pair of bright Wellingtons, and white Russia-duck trousers, an elderly, erect man, hat in hand, bowed out an angular lady in a puce dress, and white bonnet and veil of excellent quality and make.

The quartette marched sedately up the aisle, filed into line in front of the communion-table railing, and Mr. Wormwood, handing to the clerk, who handed it to the vicar, a small square of parchment, with a big blue stamp, the latter read therein how "Thomas, Archbishop of York, greeting," desired all vicars, curates, and clerks in holy orders, "by these presents," and "the authority in him vested" to "marry according to the rites and ceremonies of the Church of England, Ephraim Doolittle Jarvis, widower, of the parish of Daisybourne, in the county of York, to Martha Broadfoot, spinster, also of the said parish, they being of full age and years of discretion, and desiring to enter into the lawful bonds of matrimony," etc. etc.

So there they stood, and the service was read, and the ring and the fee, in gold, laid on the church service book, and the bridegroom was given away by Wormwood, and the red-nosed bride by Miss Grimshaw, and the register was signed; and then Ephraim Jarvis and Miss Martha Broadfoot that was, now Mrs. Ephraim Jarvis, walked home to the shep (which was shut up all that afternoon), and a parti carrée formed after a dinner of a couple of fowls, a hook of ham, and jam tart, the four sat down to a game of whist until bed-time, when Mr. Wormwood saw Miss Grimshaw home, having won three shillings and elevenpence at "penny points" of his hosts; Mr. and Mrs. Jarvis, a triumph which he boasted of, but which his partner, Miss Grimshaw, declared, until her dying day, was owing entirely to her skilful play.

This third marriage must naturally raise the question:

"Where was Millicent Jarvis, our third Valentine?"

In a pretty, but somewhat dingy and dilapidated cottage-ornes in St. John's Wood, the verandah and trellis-work of which sorely needed a little touching up by the brush of the housepainter, while the small front garden, once full of creeping and pendulous flowers and foliage in boxes, vases, and terra-cotta urns, was weedgrown, straggling, and green with dank moss, resided a lady known as Mistress Townley. Though the cottage was, as we have said, somewhat dingy on the outside, within it was furnished with extravagant luxury.

A West-end upholsterer had fitted the small drawing-room, regardless of cost, the boudoir adjoining was of pink and silver, and lace and embroidery, while the parlour, or reception room, was replete with every luxury that wealth can command or thrust into such limited space. Yet all looked slovenly, ill-kept, and disordered, as well it might be when you looked at the slipshod, unkempt slattern who was the only servant or help in this small un-governed establishment.

It was past noon, an hour or two past, yet the parlour fire had not long been lighted; indeed so short a time that Sally Sharp had putulantly told her "missus" that she shouldn't ha' come down yet, as it always smoked o' thatons till the chimney got warm;" adding "that there grocer chap as brings the brandy and tea has bin here agin, a bully-raggin' me like anything, as, he ses, I haven't a-told you as he won't leave no more things till the last bill's paid."

To this the lady, for such she seemed in manners and attire, replied without offence in her tone, as she took forth a well-filled purse:

"It's I that am to blame, Sally, I dare say, the poor man wants his money; how much is it?"

Sally took a small ticket from behind the corner of the chimney-glass.

"Three pounds, fifteen, Sally. Here are four sovereigns, and if I am not in when he comes again you can pay him, there's a good girl." The lady sighed heavily, and spoke in such a despondent tone that Sally, who like many in her position, had a feeling heart under her rude manner and insolent speech, looked at her mistress's face and perceived that her eyes were red with weeping.

"Lor' loves, missus, I didn't mean to grieve 'ee—that I didn't. Pray, go upstairs, do 'ee, and don't mind of such trash as he. Don't 'ee pay he missus, till it quite suits 'ee, or don't pay 'ee at all; many gentlefolks don't, and send him off with, as good as he brings."

The tears coarsed down her mistress's cheek, but not from the cause poor Sally conjectured.

"There now, do 'ee go upstairs, missus, and I'll light the fire in your bedroom, and another in the

drawing-room. Drat the smoke!" as a puff of blinding density poured from the little fireplace. "There now," and Mrs. Townley left the room with a sort of listless obedience to her uncouth adviser.

"There's som'at up with missus's friend, and that Honourable Mister Poyntz, as he calls himself, or I'm no conjuror," soliloquized Sally, as with greasy hands she raked out the fire and closed the flap of the register-stove. "I'll get a holiday this blessed night, and I'll go up to Chaney Mews and learn everything of Joe Straps; he knows all about the family, and he'll tell me all."

A carriage was heard on the gravel road, and by dashed a high dog-cart phaeton.

"Oh, giniini crikey!" exclaimed the forcible but inelegant Sally, "why if there isn't Mister Townley himself, and that 'ere no-good Albany Poyntz. Ah, there they're stopped a little lower down and the guv'nor's a gettin' down and leavin' Mister Poyntz behind with Joe."

Sally's mode of behaviour to her master was also peculiar. Instead of going straight to the door, she scrambled upstairs, and in a hoarse whisper announced the arrival:

"Oh, missus, here's the guv'nor?"

Mrs. Townley walked to the chimney-glass, wiped her eyes and adjusted her head-dress.

"And there's that feller as I never can like, that there Mister Poyntz along with 'em."

Sally could not read the deathly paleness and the stars of horror which fixed the features of poor Mrs. Townley at the name.

"Is he coming in?" asked she with a gasp.

"Lor lov'ee, no, don't be frightened, he's a stayin' outside wi' Joe."

Mrs. Townley breathed again.

"Let your master in, Sally," said she, in a faint voice, and she took her seat at a pearl inlaid writing desk standing on a table of ebony and buhl.

She was certainly a very pretty woman, that Mrs. Townley; graceful in figure, exquisitely elegant in her negligé attire, and with a certain air of refinement, though the keen observer might detect an alternate flush and pallor, as of dissipation, and an occasional fierce flash of the eye and a hectic patch of the cheek when moved to anger by some internal thought.

Several sheets of writing paper lay before her, spoiled by a few words or lines of an unfinished letter upon which she had been fruitlessly engaged. The hall door opened.

"Phew! tchoo! Why, what's the matter, Sally? What have you been doing to kick up all this smother? Is your mistress up? I mean, upstairs, Sally."

"That's where she is, my lord, and awful—"

"Sally, if you don't remember to forget to call me my lord," you'll very soon see the outside of that door."

"Which won't fret me worry much, sir, if you likes that better. But, as I said, missus is awful taking on, and very ill."

"Hold your chatter, Sally," interposed the young man, slipping at the same time two half-crowns into Sally's dirty paw, which she looked at, and then transferred them into a spacious wallet inside her petticoat.

"I'll go and tell her you're here."

"No; I'll announce myself."

The young man ascended the stairs two at a time, and after a mere formal tap at the door, the Honourable Spencely Dashwood stood in the presence of Millicent Jarvis.

Poor Millicent! Dearly had she bought her young experience in the hard school of the world's realities. Vanity, an uncontrolled indulgence, or rather the culpable neglect of a cold and sordid parent, the early loss of a mother's care, an unbounded conceit of her own superiority of talent over the rustics around her, the universal adulation of the opposite sex at her admitted beauty, had so filled her young mind with pride, and rendered her so dissatisfied with her unattractive home that she was almost an accomplice in her own abduction. We have already seen how Millicent comforted herself at the Grange, where she was, it was noticed, never again invited. As to her frequent meetings with the young heir to the Dashwood peerage, they soon became so much the talk of everybody in Daisybourne, high and low, that not only was her society avoided, but several of the signing swains, who were ever ready to proffer their services and company, or more boldly to breathe their vows, actually, to use a town phrase, "cut her dead."

In the midst of this young Dashwood left his readings at the vicarage for an Oxford term; and Millicent was left to her own resources, which were infinitely small, and to the company of Miss Broadfoot, whose lectures and remarks became daily more

offensive and irritating, while an appeal to her father was met with a cold approval of the "housekeeper's" reproofs and warnings.

Poor Millicent had not a friend or adviser in the world. What wonder then that an unprincipled scoundrel—a deceiver with the tongue of youth, the blandishments of an unscrupulous villain, the command of wealth, and the dazzling perspective of a coronet, should persuade such an unguarded girl to leave her comfortable home and her unloved parent, upon promises such as the dishonourable young man hesitated not to pledge.

Returning stealthily to Daisybourne in the guise of a commercial traveller, he sought an interview with his Valentine.

"Millicent, my dearest, your talents and taste are buried in this dreadful hole. In London, fortunes are made by hundreds of women with a tittle of your skill. At the West-end are milliners who ride about in their carriages and reckon their profits by thousands a year. The patronage of my family would make any one who might exclusively obtain it. Nay, dearest Millicent, I will hear of no difficulties, money will smooth them over. I will place you in a position in which you must succeed, and when you have prospered I will ask but one reward—your good wishes and your thanks, but not till I have deserved them."

"The woman who once hesitates is lost," says the poet, but what of the woman who don't even hesitate?

Millicent Jarvis, who had never ceased to keep up a correspondence with the young nobleman, had for weeks been counting her small sum of money, valuing her modest trinkets and presents, and preparing for a journey to that wide and dangerous London of which she knew so little but had heard so much that was attractive to the simple mind.

Her air-built castle was to offer her services as a needlewoman and improver in some fashionable house, to so economise her resources as to live out in humble obscurity her probationary period, and then, leaving the rest to fortune and her own resolute (?) will, to earn her independence; and who knew, but some day she might look in upon her unloving father and craved Miss Broadfoot, and repay with scorn that lady's lectures and evil forebodings.

Alas, how many such cloud-castles do wilfulness and ignorance build, to be dissipated by the first light of reality.

It was at this juncture that young Dashwood returned stealthily to Daisybourne, with his proffers, as he pretended, to further Millicent Jarvis's views, and aid her in her struggle for independence.

Spencely Dashwood wrote her a recommendatory letter to a "lady" who had a "millinery establishment" at Chelsea (it was not far from Cromorne Gardens), which, he said, was only temporary, but would be very convenient from the West-end. He listened with apparent solicitude and approbation to her little plans, laughed at them, and substituted his own.

Madame Rucho was a very good sort of a woman. Her husband, who was a great scamp, and cook at a Pall Mall Club, compelled her to support herself by her own earnings from dressmakers and lodgers, while he spent his own large wages in dissipation and gambling. He pitied poor Madame Rucho, and simple Millicent did so too.

On the third night after this Millicent Jarvis stole from her father's roof, joined her so-called lover in a postchaise at the street end, reached the nearest Great Northern Station in half an hour, entered an "engaged" compartment of a first-class carriage with Spencely Dashwood, and as a foggy sun rose over the "huge dun cupola" of London, alighted at King's Cross.

There a hired carriage, attended by Joe Straps, awaited them by the top platform, into which they entered.

"—Terrace, —Parade, King's Road, Chelsea," said Spencely Dashwood to the driver. "You can go down to Didcot by the 9.30 train from Paddington, Straps, I shall not want you further."

The address sounded rather grand in the simple ears of poor Millicent, nevertheless Madame Rucho and her domicile (although her arrival was evidently expected) did not at all prepossess her.

There Millicent stayed two weeks, during which time she could not fail to more than suspect the character of both the house and its mistress.

She was horrified and helpless, and revolving means to escape, when Spencely re-appeared, to him she communicated her "discovery," as she supposed it.

He professed his surprise and indignation, paid Madame Rucho's bill with affected anger, and a sly wink at the old procuress, and that night Millicent, at a late hour, was installed in the pretty cottage orna at St. John's Wood, with Sally as her help and confidante.

The promises had been vacated only a week before by a friend of Mr. Albany Poyntz. Need we fill up the interval between that day and the three years that elapsed between the morning of the present interview?

Millicent Jarvis rose with tearful eyes, and gazed fixedly at Spencely Dashwood. The latter looked somewhat uneasy, but put on a studied air of indifference.

"You have Albany Poyntz with you," said she, calmly.

"Ahem!" said Spencely, looking through the window. "Y-as, he's there. I gave him a seat down to Regent's Park."

"Spencely, he's a villain! Beware of that man! I do not ask you to believe me; here is the proof of his perfidy."

The young peer, for such he had lately become by the death of his father at Florence, looked at the letter handed to him. He turned his head with ill-concealed mirth. The proposal to Millicent to elope with the writer had been concocted as a capital joke at a wine party a night or two before, at which a heavy bet had been made that Millicent would keep the secret. It offered a house, a carriage, and, in the event of the writer marrying, a handsome settlement for life.

"I'll petrify him!" exclaimed the young peer. "The impudent scoundrel! He knows, Milly, that I'm in for the matrimonial noose with Lady Adeline Vavasour."

Poor Millicent's eyes dilated with surprise, and a cold chill crept through her veins at his heartless tones.

"Y-as, it's too true, but this is fast, very fast. You'll give me this letter, Milly?"

Poor Millicent! She made no reply. She lay the next moment senseless and fainting on the floor.

"Here, Sally, Sally, come upstairs, your mistress is in a fit. Egad, I didn't think she'd take it in this fashion. How I do hate women that will make scenes. Here, Sally, look to your mistress. Get anything she wants. And, d'ye hear Sally, tell her when she comes to that I'll write to her to-morrow, and make arrangements. Capital! Won't Albany laugh on the wrong side when I pull out this letter to the club-smokers, and ask him for the odd fifty he laid at five to one that Milly would not even show me the letter. Ha! ha!"

And the more then "honourable," the "most noble" earl hurried downstairs to his friend, Albany Poyntz.

"Poor creature," said the sympathising Sally, "this here's a downright faint, and no mistake, none of your lady shams. Lor' help us, what these great folks has to answer for, sure-ly. To my thinking the master's not a pin to choose better nor his friend Mister Poyntz. Poor lady," and Sally busied herself most efficaciously with a burnt pen feather, preston salts, and rubbing her hands with toilet vinegar until Millicent came back to a dreadful consciousness of the hard and wicked world around her, and a full horror of the deep-dyed villainy of the man she had once thought she could love.

(To be Continued.)

SELFISHNESS.

"Music hath charms to soothe the savage breast," is one of those old saws that are constantly being overthrown by modern instances. A gentleman of musical tastes has an organ fitted up in his chamber, but instead of soothing the feelings of his fellow lodger, it irritates and annoys to such an extent that the aggrieved has to seek refuge in flight, and the consequence is an application for judicial assistance, but the magistrate, who thinks it is "an intolerable nuisance," states he has no power to convict. Without going into the merits of the case, there are a certain number of individuals who think the world made for them alone, and go through life constantly treading on the toes of other people, and the consequence is that when two of such dispositions meet, a general crushing of corns ensues, much to the amusement of the spectators generally, and the annoyance of the actors themselves.

The gorilla in the Berlin Aquarium which excited so much interest among German naturalists has lately recovered from a serious illness, and is now more than ever demonstrative and human-like in his movements. With the approach of winter a soft silky fur has made its appearance. The weight of this young gorilla has increased from thirty-three to forty-three pounds during the six months' residence in Europe, a fact which would seem to show that the Berlin air agrees with him.

INTELLIGENCE THE KEY TO SUCCESS.

It may be laid down as a general rule that, in any business, whether it be in trade, in mechanics, or manufacturing, the intelligent educated man will be the most apt to succeed. Of course there are exceptions, but they only prove the truth of the general rule. And by this we do not mean the collegian or the man liberally educated in the schools, for as a general thing they are not the men we find in shops and factories.

But we do mean those mechanics and proprietors or superintendents of manufacturing establishments who make it a point to improve upon their common school education by judicious reading and study, by which means they keep themselves posted upon all the improvements and advances made, not only in the industries generally, but specially in that particular industry in which they are personally interested.

For several years past our business has brought us into frequent contact with manufacturers in almost every branch of industry, and we have observed closely the general intellectual status of this large and growing class of our population.

There are two classes of manufacturers occupying opposite extremes—those devoting all the time they can spare, or even more, to the acquisition of mechanical information—in some instances, perhaps, to the neglect of the practical business details of their calling; the other class, which is much the larger, refusing or neglecting to avail themselves of the information furnished by those publications and journals devoted exclusively to mechanical, manufacturing, and scientific subjects.

They claim that they have no time to spend in reading papers—no time to waste in the pursuit of knowledge. Indeed they rather boast that, although they have subscribed for some paper devoted to mechanical, scientific, and useful information, they have not even opened it for months, and not unfrequently they will point to a dust-covered pile of unopened papers, with a smile of self-satisfied pride, as an evidence of their independence of all editorial or extraneous assistance. Such men forget that this is an age of progress—that nearly all our manufacturing industries are in that transition state, as it were, between a helpful opening and a full fruition of final success.

Improvements in methods, improvements in machinery, and improvements in products are constantly being made; and the manufacturer who neglects to keep himself posted on all such matters not unfrequently deprives himself of the information and experience of others, that would contribute largely to his own success. Intelligence is one of the first essentials to the successful prosecution of profitable industries; and the proprietor or manager of extensive manufacturing establishments, who goes on the assumption that he already knows all that is worth knowing in relation to the industry in which he is engaged, will be apt to find himself, in the long run left far behind in the race by many who have started out later in the day and under far less favourable circumstances, apparently, who have availed themselves of all the aids offered to keep fully up with the march of improvement.

The growth and progress of manufacturing industries in this country have been stimulated and urged on to their present development largely by the advocacy and encouragement of editors and writers who have given their whole time and talent to the study and investigation of the subject in all its bearings—who have accumulated a vast amount of valuable, practical as well as theoretical information, that can only fail of its object to benefit and advance the cause to which they are devoted by want of application by those for whose advantage it was collated, digested and prepared.

The ancients had a saying, which, literally translated, reads: "Life is short but art is long." The range of knowledge, information, or intelligence is so extensive that one man can hardly expect, or be expected, to cover the whole ground. Hence we have a variety of journals or publications devoted to a variety of subjects, covering a variety of fields of thought, study and investigation.

First of all comes the newspaper devoted to the current events of the day. This, of course, every intelligent citizen, whatever his calling or occupation, should read. After that come political, literary, scientific, religious, industrial news, etc. And this latter class is still further divided into agricultural, mechanical, manufacturing news, etc.

These journals are, or should be, conducted by men of intelligence, of careful and thoughtful study—men who honestly and earnestly labour for the advantage of the special interest to which they are

devoted. It would be a libel on human nature to suppose that such an editor would not collect, collate, and present many useful and practical facts and much valuable information that could not be otherwise obtained. The men, or class of men, for whose especial benefit or edification such information is prepared, who, through ignorance, prejudice, self-sufficiency, or any other cause, ignore and disregard it, neglect their own interests, and punish themselves much worse than they do the editors whose labours they treat so cavalierly. In this age of the world, ignorance will not win in the race with intelligence, though circumstances may, for the time being, seem to be in its favour.

PUBLIC AMUSEMENTS.

THE DRAMA.

CRITERION THEATRE.

ABOUT four years ago a very clever French comedy was produced at the Palais Royal, called "Le Reveillon." In the three years following London has seen "Le Reveillon" in three different forms. First we had the play of MM. Meilhac and Halévy, with certain "cuttings" considered necessary by the deputy Chamberlain, represented at the Royalty Theatre. Then Mr. W. S. Gilbert took it in hand, an author whose original compositions might well give hope of something to surpass even the original. But the fun somehow evaporated in the translation or rewriting. The supper act, which was the abiding memory with those who had seen old Schey as the original Tourillon, was left out; the play was lost, and "Committed for Trial" was followed by condemnation. Yet Mr. Arthur Cecil as the injured husband, Mr. Compton as the imperturbable policeman, Mr. J. H. Montague and Miss Carlotta Addison, made studies of their several parts, which will be remembered by the judges of good and conscientious art-work. An interval and a novelty, "Der Flüdermann," was announced at the Alhambra, but the "The Bat" was nothing more nor less than "Le Reveillon" carved, trimmed, and fashioned into a musical or operatic piece. And now we have a second version from the admirable pen of Mr. Gilbert, entitled "On Bail." The renowned supper scene is restored; but instead of its being held in the hotel of Prince Gormontoff it comes off in the green-room of a theatre, attended by actresses, and by the manager and his wife. Why dual hospitality to a very miscellaneous company is less objectionable behind the scenes of a theatre than in a dual hotel we cannot exactly perceive.

We will endeavour, in as few words as possible, to give an idea of the plot of "On Bail," which closely follows the French original. Jonathan Lovibond is liable to a short imprisonment, and "On Bail," but the police are about to arrest him, when Hobbethwaite (Mr. H. Ashley), a theatrical manager, serves his friend Lovibond, and plays off a practical joke, played on himself years before, by getting Mrs. Lovibond's lover (Alfred P. Trimble) taken into custody instead of that lady's husband. Lovibond is asked out that very night to what proves a "fast" party, and there meets the governor of the gaol in which he was to have spent the morning, so that when he surrenders to his bail he is able to settle all matters with the infatuated musician Trimble (Mr. H. Righton), who has taken his place in prison, and might have compromised his connubial felicity. Mr. Charles Wyndham, as the volatile Jonathan Lovibond, is awfully energetic when transported with rage; he encounters the presumed seducer of his wife, and punishes him so lustily that the audience roared with delight. Miss Fanny Josephs, too, as the young Duke of Darlington, who gives the supper in the green-room, played excellently, and without exaggeration. Mrs. Hobbethwaite, the manager's lady, a sort of tragedy queen, was handsomely and amusingly personified by Miss Bromley. Mr. Marcoly (Mr. J. Clarke), the governor of the gaol, who comes with the sergeant of police to arrest Lovibond, but takes Trimble, evoked roars of laughter when, introduced to Lovibond himself, by manager Hobbethwaite, as Sir Ferdinand Bracebridge, he assumes his real character as Marcoly the gaoler. Miss Edith Bruce as Perkins, Mrs. Lovibond's maid, gave a good sample of that class of character-acting. "On Bail" evidently took with the Criterion audience on its first night, and will command "a run."

"Dorothy's Stratagem," by the editor of "Figaro," which we lately noticed satisfactorily fills up the programme of this theatre.

M. CHARLES LECOQ'S NEW OPERETTA.

THE Paris papers are filled with laudatory notices of a new opera bouffe by Charles Lecoq, the popular composer of Madame Angot, &c. &c., called "La Marjolaine," which is said to surpass all his former efforts. The story as the critics tell it, is certainly just what our Lord Chamberlain will not tolerate, and very properly too. The scene is laid in Brussels, where a prize was formerly given to the most virtuous woman in the place; the prize is awarded by the burgomaster. There is no lack of candidates, yet for nine years the prize has been awarded to "La Marjolaine," who has captivated the heart of, and is actually the wife of, a rich old baron, a terrible old rake, and member of the "Société des Gais Océbataires," whose motto is "Guerra au Mari." So confident is the old sinner of "La Marjolaine's" virtue that he lays a large wager, and invites his avowedly libertine companions to an entertainment at his house, where La Marjolaine, insulted by his misconduct, favours the idea that she has fallen to the snare of Annibal, President of the Club of Gay Bachelors, already mentioned. The Baron enraged, turns out La Marjolaine and hands over his property to Annibal. The Baron turns cook in a country house, formerly his own property, and "La Marjolaine" hawks wooden clocks about the country in a hand-cart, accompanied by her foster-brother and former lover Frickell, to whom she has explained her marriage with the Baron, upon which they strike up a platonic partnership. La Marjolaine meets the culinary Baron, who, as she cannot prove her innocence, gets a divorce from the burgomaster, and returns in triumph. Annibal is overcome, at last, by his false position, and confesses the true state of affairs; but La Marjolaine, now at liberty, refuses to renew her bondage to the Baron, and falls into the arms of the faithful Frickell. The silly old victim, the duped Baron, sees his folly, and cheerfully gives his consent, and so ends the piece.

Milto. Granier's "La Marjolaine" is studded with delightful airs, in contrasted styles, from beginning to end. Berthelin's stupid old Baron is a comic, as well as musical, triumph. Annibal (M. Vauthin) is a fine baritone, and Frickell's (M. Pajets) part is one that will be struggled for by all our light and lively tenors. The songs, duets, trios, and choruses present a perfect feast of lively melody and harmonies. With a reformed libretto, "La Marjolaine" must soon cross the Channel by force of its musical merits.

GLOBE THEATRE.

"SQUABBLES" is the title of a two act comedy by the late Stirling Clynne, which appeared some quarter of a century ago at the Olympic, under the name of "My Wife's Daughter." It is clever and characteristic, which is more than we can say of its modern successors, and well deserved revival. Mr. Ormonde, after spending most of his money in fashionable London life, marries a handsome widow whose fortune gives him a new start. Unfortunately, the lady has not been quite candid, in the desire to appear young she has sadly under-stated the term of her widowhood, and spoken as a dear little child of her daughter's, a buxom damsel of sweet seventeen. Now, Miss Clara, having found a lover, runs away from boarding-school, and makes her way to her new papa's house, in search of her widowed mamma, where her arrival occasions a perfect heap of squabbles. The good-natured Ormonde is dumfounded by being addressed as father by such a womanly daughter. So he hides the newcomer at her own request till he can break the tidings of her escape to her mother. Meanwhile, the servants in the kitchen have the worst suspicions of the confidences apparent to them between "master" and the young lady, and in the interests of their ill-used mistress, she is informed of a lady locked in the library. Now, Mrs. Ormonde has a jealousy of a certain Mr. Ivyleaf, and, of course, concludes that here is an intrigue under her own roof. All sorts of little "squabbles" ensue until the denouement, which, of course, unravels all the mysteries. Mr. Beveridge played Mr. Ormonde with judgment and vivacity, and Miss Dolores Drummond left nothing to complete in the picture of the jealous wife. Praise must also be awarded to the pleasant Mrs. Ivyleaf of Miss Rachel Sanger, and the agreeable hoyden of Miss Steele as the ruddy Clara. The gem of the piece, however, is the Gilliflower of Mr. George Barrett, who really invests the time-worn character of a stage-servant with the freshness and turn of originality. With the "Invisible Prince," this second revival makes up a bill of fare of substantial merit, which may well hold its own against a score of ephemeral novelties.

HENRY DILLON, a young actor, has died at Kirkcaldy from a sword cut, received while performing at Dunfermline. Lockjaw caused death.



[NIGH UNTO DEATH.]

WHY SHE FORSOOK HIM;

OR,

THE SECRET OF HER BIRTH.

By the Author of "Basil Rivington's Romance,"

"That Young Person, etc."

CHAPTER XX.

GERALD LEARNS A SECRET.

GERALD YORKE watched his cousin Juliet closely after his tête-à-tête with her mother. Lord Thorne, although much younger than himself, was one of his favourite companions. He knew that his one hope and ambition had been to marry his guardian's daughter; he was young, handsome and wealthy.

Gerald was much surprised to hear from Lady Yorke that her daughter had refused him, evidently to the disappointment of the mother.

Seldom though Gerald had seen Miss Yorke he knew enough of her to be sure that she was no coquette, and possessed none of the ambition which was her mother's ruling passion, therefore when she refused to marry Lord Thorne, who had been her friend from childhood, it must have been from some preference for another.

When he had decided this much, Captain Yorke fancied he held the clue to my lady's sudden change of tactics. He was Charles's friend. Juliet had never seen him without Lord Thorne. Lady Yorke had merely invited him to the Hall that his presence might recall the memory of the young nobleman.

Gerald was profoundly mistaken in this idea, as Lady Yorke's own words might have told him; but he knew little of women's ways, and was a poor match for such a skilled manœuvre as Sir Roland's wife.

He stayed on at the Hall, renouncing his half-formed project of crossing the Channel, for Gerald was at a moment in his life when he had no decided plans; when he let events follow their own course, without any effort of his own will, for his brain was feverishly weary, and he could bear to think neither of the past nor future.

He was dimly conscious that he could not always

lead the life he had led since October, that he must make some change, take some decided course, but he was glad to stave this off as long as possible, and so he lingered on at Belleville because he liked the society of Sir Roland, and still more because he had no inducement to hurry back to town, and his staying pleased every one; the baronet, who cordially liked him, my lady, who had secret designs on him, and Juliet, who loved him.

Yes, Juliet loved him, unknown and unsuspected by her parents, she had long ago given her heart to her handsome cousin before she had even seen him.

She had thought her love was all in vain when at the opera he had declared that he would never marry "any man's heiress," for she had read his character well, and knew how he would shrink from accepting aught of fortune's gifts at a wife's hand. From that moment Juliet would as gladly have resigned her heiress-ship, as her mother would joyfully have done anything to harm the girl to whom that heiress-ship rightfully belonged.

When she perceived the change in her mother's manner towards Captain Yorke, when she saw him an invited guest at Belleville, she deceived herself as to Lady Yorke's motive, and fancied she had guessed her secret, she deceived herself, too, as to his coming, and believed for love of her he would forget what she had, and gave herself up to all the pleasure of this belief till she grew gay and light-hearted as none had ever seen her before. Even Gerald noticed the change, he began to think she had refused Lord Thorne only because she was ignorant of real passion, and that her mirth was that of an untrodden girlhood, and untouched heart.

He received about this time a letter from his friend, despairing enough, for Charles Thorne was a spoilt child of fortune, this was his first real trouble, and he was really, or believed himself to be very miserable.

Captain Yorke sympathised with him, perhaps he took the three sheets of lamentations more literally than they deserved; it seemed to him a pity that these two, so suited to each other, should drift apart. Evidently Juliet cared for no one else.

He had seen every family of standing in the neighbourhood, and was certain that not one had a son or brother sufficiently favoured by fortune as to have won the heart of Sir Roland's heiress. Gerald's was a generous nature, and although his own future was wrecked, he was ready to do all in his power to save his friend from becoming so too; he resolved to try to advance Charles's cause.

It was not difficult to find an opportunity. He was often alone with Juliet in a party of four, where the mistress was almost an invalid; this was but natural, besides now that Lady Yorke had brought herself to treat him as a relation she seemed willing to admit him to the full intimacy of cousinship; there was no restraint then in his intercourse with her daughter.

Juliet rode and walked with Gerald as freely as though she had known him all her life, and Sir Roland was not always with them.

He was not with them on the last day of the old year, when the two cousins had started directly after luncheon for a ride over the Surrey hills, and for the first time they both seemed, by their silence, conscious of his absence; they were not embarrassed by their tête-à-tête, only Gerald was considering how best to introduce the name of Lord Thorne, and Juliet had fallen into a sort of reverie and was dreaming day dreams too pleasantly to rouse herself for conversation; their horses were almost at a walking pace, for their riders were far from giving them their undivided attention, both were thoroughly at home in the saddle, so there was no danger to fear from their abstraction, only Juliet's brown mare seemed impatient at the delay in their progress. She was a superb animal, very spirited, but the young heiress was used to manage her favourite, and had never yet found any difficulty in controlling her.

"You are very silent, are you regretting the old year, Miss Yorke," asked Gerald, who never availed himself of his relationship as a claim to address his cousin more familiarly.

"No," she said, lightly, "I have no regrets for 1875, have you?"

Her tone jarred on Captain Yorke; he answered gravely:

"Yes, one does not come to my age without losing every year something that can never be recalled."

"You mean our youth," said Juliet, awed by his solemnity. "We all grow older, but I am glad of it."

"A strange declaration for a young lady. Why so?" dropping his serious tone.

"I do not quite know. I believe I am tired of the monotony of my youth. I would like something more than our life of parties, theatres, balls in the season, and quiet inaction out of it, each year always the same."

Their horses were still at a walking pace. Gerald would not use his opportunity.

"And yet you could have changed your life completely had you so willed."

She made no attempt to misunderstand his meaning.

"I would not change it by a crime, Captain Yorke."

"A crime!" he repeated, amazed.

"Yes. I know you are alluding to your friend, Lord Thorne. He is my friend too. He is all that is generous and kind, and it would have been a crime to deceive him."

"You speak very strongly."

"Perhaps I feel strongly, too, Captain Yorke. My mamma may have asked you to speak to me of Lord Thorne, but please do not; I cannot bear it."

There was such an accent of truth in her words that Gerald at once desisted.

"Shall we have a gallop?" he asked.

And they had it; only perhaps that conversation had unnerved Juliet; perhaps her horse resented the neglect she had shown it that afternoon. It became restless and spirited to a degree, and Gerald, to his dismay, perceived that she had lost all control over it, and was unable to check its speed, which increased so rapidly as almost to bear her out of sight.

He galloped after her. It was a fierce pursuit; the horse had evidently taken flight; its pace grew wilder and wilder every instant, and at the very moment when Gerald hoped he was gaining on it, he saw Juliet thrown violently to the ground, but almost by a miracle not beneath the horse's feet.

Captain Yorke dismounted hastily and rushed to her side.

At first he believed she was dead, so cold and motionless was she, and the groom, arriving a few minutes later, uttered shrieks of despair in the same conviction.

"Be quiet, idiot!" cried the captain, angrily, "Where is the nearest house?"

"More than three miles, sir. Right the other side of the hills."

"Impossible to get her there," muttered Gerald.

But his anger had restored the frightened groom to his wits; he was an old man, grown grey in the service of the Yorkes, and faithfully attached to his young mistress.

"They've a carriage there, sir, and I could be back with it in no time, its half as near again as the Hall."

"That's right, my friend!" cried Gerald, heartily, "off with you, and above all, be careful that no rumour of this gets to Belleville; we must break it carefully to Lady Yorke."

Left alone, Captain Yorke gazed earnestly at the pale figure before him; he had never seen anyone unconscious, and had no idea of the usual remedies; he was terrified at the thought of Sir Roland's despair, and wondered, sadly, whether he were destined to bring sorrow wherever he went. He raised Juliet gently, and rested her head on a large, flat stone, then he began to chafe her ice-cold hands in his warm ones.

"Poor little soul," he thought, "she would have made a true wife. A crime to accept a man she did not love. What a pity all women don't think so."

He plunged his hand into his pocket, he had been out hunting with Sir Roland the day before, perhaps by good luck he had still his flask with him; fortune favoured him, for he found it and it was not quite empty; with difficulty he poured a few drops of its contents between Juliet's clenched teeth and then resumed the task of chafing her hands. Presently she gave a sigh which Gerald joyfully hailed as her return to life, she opened her eyes and turned them slowly on him, but to his terror there was no sign of recognition in her gaze, she seemed not thoroughly aroused, but was on the borderland between unconsciousness and awakening.

"Juliet!"

She started wildly at the word, raised one hand to her head, then let it fall helpless to her side.

"Juliet," she repeated faintly, as a person trying to convince herself of something new and strange, "he calls me Juliet, he must love me then at last."

Gerald was cruelly bewildered; it seemed wicked to leave her there alone, yet all his honour revolted at the idea of learning, through her helplessness, a secret which in her health she would most jealously have guarded.

"You are here in the Giant's Valley," he said, soothingly, "you have fallen from your horse, but I trust you are not much hurt, and I hope we shall soon get you home."

She did not answer him; one would have said she did not hear him, she seemed wrapped in ecstasy, and to heed nothing around.

"Juliet," she murmured again. "He said Juliet; I heard him. Oh, say she hates Gerald because he is the heir."

This doubt seemed too much for her. Her head

fell back on its hard pillow. She relapsed into a stupor, and Gerald was left there in possession of her secret. She loved him, this simple, true-hearted girl. For his sake, then, she had refused his friend. He was astounded. He had never sought Juliet's affection, never even tried to please her.

Men seldom value unasked for love, but Gerald Yorke respected Juliet all the more for the secret he had so involuntarily surprised. Never by word or look had she sought to gain his attention. She had been with him simply friendly, yet she had loved him all the while, because of that love she had refused to be Lady Thorne; how different to that other girl, barely two years older, whom he had so madly worshipped, to whom, though poor and obscure, he had offered his name and future title, and who had feigned to care for him till she learned that he was less wealthy than she thought, when she forsook him. Ah, what a difference between her and Juliet!

The welcome sound of wheels reached him; to his surprise, down the narrow lane came the Belleville carriage, and Lady Yorke was in it. She had met the groom whilst taking her drive, and astonished to see him alone, had insisted on an explanation. The old man had yielded, seeing that help must thus arrive sooner to his young mistress.

My lady was very pale, but perfectly calm. She spoke no reproach to Gerald, but she regarded her daughter as though indeed on her still face the verdict of life or death. Gerald explained the accident.

"I had feared it," said my lady, simply. "My poor child is too venturesome."

They placed themselves in the carriage, her head supported on her mother's lap; then Gerald mounted his horse to summon the nearest doctor, and the groom remained to seek the runaway mare who had caused the disaster.

Captain Yorke bitterly regretted the accident that had revealed Juliet's secret to him. He only hoped that if she recovered she might be unconscious of having betrayed it; of her death he dared not think.

When he had regained the Hall he eagerly awaited the doctor's verdict; come what might, he would always feel himself in part guilty of that day's work; he ought not to have spoken to Juliet on such a subject when she was mounted on a spirited horse that required all her skill to manage, he ought never to have mentioned it at all; he was not intimate enough with Juliet to give him the right of an old friend to offer advice; far better would it have been to leave Lord Thorne's cause alone. Now he had not only led to an accident which might cost the girl's innocent life, but he had learned a secret, he guessed well, she held dearer even than life itself.

He thought a little bitterly of the capriciousness of fate. Here was Juliet Yorke, to whom he had never given a second thought, preferring him to a handsome young nobleman who adored her, and he, Gerald, could not return her affection because all the love he had to give was lavished on a woman utterly worthless of it, whom, alas, despite her worthlessness, he could not forget.

The entrance of Lady Yorke roused him from his reverie, her face was more softened than he had ever seen it, her voice trembled as she said:

"Juliet is asleep, Captain Yorke, and Doctor Townsend assures us she has no real injury, and he hopes in a day or two she will be quite herself again."

"I am very thankful," said Gerald, from the bottom of his heart. "Lady Yorke, I should never have forgiven myself if harm had come to her."

"It was not your fault," returned my lady, with her charming smile. "I am sure Juliet would say so too."

Gerald wondered whether she suspected her daughter's secret, if so, he believed he at last knew the true cause of his invitation to Belleville.

That night, the last of the old year, as he sat alone by the cheerful fire in his dressing room, Captain Yorke bravely looked his position in the face; for the first time since his return from Luton he thought seriously of his future. That day had taught him at least one certainty, after his discovery he was bound in honour to leave the Hall unless he meant to marry Juliet.

Gerald Yorke was no self-deceiver, he knew perfectly that he would never love another woman as he had loved Madeline Darrelly, but she had deceived him, and his trust in her was gone; even had she been willing, had she implored his forgiveness, he would never have married her, for his whole married life would have been an agony of jealousy and doubt; thus in his future Madeline could have no place, the best, the happiest thing for him was the power to forget her, and this seemed beyond his efforts.

For almost three months he had been seeking oblivion. He had sought it ardently in pleasure, amusements, society; he had done all possible to banish me-

mory, and memory remained the same, clear, distinct and all present. He could not pass his whole life in this wild search after distraction.

Slowly there was coming to Captain Yorke the conviction that so long as they both were free this love of his which had survived the loss of esteem, desertion and absence, would survive still, that the only chance of conquering it was to raise up a barrier that nothing could bridge over between him and the past, in a word, to marry.

Honour and esteem he could offer to a wife, perhaps in time, tenderness—passionate love, never; yet that, he reflected, was not a necessity in the nineteenth century.

It would be better so. In such a union his life might ebb peacefully and tranquilly away. He might not be happy.

Gerald began to think he had had his portion of happiness in his brief dream at Luton Rectory; but he would be saved, he spared the wild tumult of the last three months.

Juliet was young and true. He knew she loved him. As her husband he would lead a better, nobler life than as the dejected, disappointed man, seeking to bury the past, refusing to look at the future, drowning all thought in perpetual distractions.

He felt a strange embarrassment at the thought of meeting Juliet, this grey-eyed girl who loved him, and whom he did not love. He meant to marry her and surround her with tenderness and care, with all things save the one a woman needs the most to make her happy—love.

It was three days after the accident before she left her room. She had received no injury, but the shock had weakened her, and the doctor spoke of care.

Gerald half started when going up to the drawing-room with Sir Roland one evening when the New Year was just three days old; he found her there sitting in an easy chair, drawn quite close to the fire, and looking pale and ill.

He regarded her with a strange, new interest, and confessed her face was not without its charms. He wondered whether she remembered anything of their last conversation, and whether she were angry with him for speaking of Lord Thorne. A vivid flush coloured her cheek on his entrance, but when it disappeared her face was as white as her muslin dress. He took a seat beside her, and expressed his pleasure at her convalescence.

Juliet answered simply, yet kindly. She had two qualities very strange for the child of Gertrude Yorke; she had no idea of artifice, and she had never learnt to conceal her feelings.

"I'm afraid you will not accept of my escort again," said Gerald; "I cannot think how I could have been so blind as not to see that your horse was getting restive."

Juliet smiled.

"It was not your fault, Captain Yorke. I am not hurt, so there is no harm done."

"Only you have begun the New Year badly."

He devoted himself to her all that evening; he surrounded her with the little attentions her recent illness required, he talked to her, told her anecdotes of his travels that needed no reply; only once, when he was speaking of Abyssinia, she surprised him by saying:

"Yes, I read that in the newspaper."

"What, did you read the war articles then? It is more than five years ago."

"Yes," said Juliet, "I was only fourteen, but papa always used to read me the accounts of the war; we were so proud when we read you were to have the Victoria Cross."

"Do you know my mother, Gerald?" asked Sir Roland, suddenly interrupting this conversation, to the displeasure of his wife.

"I have not seen Lady Frances since I was a boy at school."

"You will be able to renew your acquaintance, she is coming next week."

"You are sure to like her," said Juliet, "everyone likes her grandmother."

Then turning to her mother, "which day does she come, mamma?"

"Wednesday," answered Lady Yorke, quickly. "I hope you will be quite well by then, Juliet, for she brings a young lady with her, and I shall want you to entertain her."

"A young lady, mamma; how strange!"

"Not at all," answered Sir Roland; "she is staying at the Elms, and your grandmother could not possibly leave her alone."

"Only grandmamma never does have young ladies staying with her," objected Juliet.

Invitations had long been issued for a party at the hall on Twelfth Night, and Juliet being so much better, Lady Yorke did not countermand them; on the morning of that day Gerald had been to London for an hour or two. On his return he entered the drawing-room to deliver to Lady Yorke a commission

with which she had honoured him; but my lady was not there, some preparation for the evening had called her away, and Juliet sat alone, surrounded by a mass of rare hot-house flowers which she had been arranging in the costly vases of Bohemian glass. Captain Yorke sat down to await her mother's return.

Juliet did not speak since her accident; she had lost her careless ease with him, and a slight constraint had sprung up in their intercourse. Gerald was conscious of it, but as yet he had done nothing to remove it.

He was thinking deeply, as he watched Juliet arranging her flowers. He had resolved to ask her to be his wife; he had no eager anxiety as to her answer. If she accepted him he would honestly try to make her happy. If not, he would strive no longer against the memory of Madeline, but still cherish in his heart the ideal he had believed to find in her.

Juliet held up the bouquet she had in her hands, asking:

"Do you like flowers, Captain Yorke?"

"Yes, and you have some very beautiful ones there. Are they all from the conservatory?"

"Yes; but there are plenty left. Belleville is noted for its flowers."

"You are very fond of Belleville, Juliet?" he asked, suddenly.

She blushed at hearing her name from his lips, and then said, frankly:

"Yes, very. It has been my home ever since I was a little girl."

"Juliet, will you let it be your home always? Could you like me well enough to be my wife?"

He spoke earnestly, but without the slightest emotion. He had none of the passionate ardour with which he had wooed Madeline Darnley. Passion, he believed, was dead in him for ever. He simply asked a question, made a proposition.

"Your wife?" repeated Juliet, bending her fair face over her flowers.

"Yes. I know I am not worthy of you, that I do not merit such an innocent, true heart as yours, but I will do my utmost to make you happy."

She loved him so well, poor child, she had loved him so long, and so hopelessly, that she did not notice the absence of all enthusiasm in his wooing. She forgot that barely a week ago he had seemed surprised at her rejection of his friend. She only knew that he asked her to be his wife, and promised to make her happy. It was the greatest joy earth could hold for her. She would rather be his wife than a peeress.

Silently she put out her hand. Gerald took it in both of his, and, as he looked at the young girl, and read her perfect trust in him, he resolved that his whole life should be a struggle to deserve that trust.

"You are sure you will not repent, child?" he said, almost hoarsely. "Can you really trust me enough to leave your home for me?"

"Yes," said Juliet, in her clear, low voice. "I am not afraid of anything with you."

He kissed the little hand he still held, almost reverentially, then they heard the sound of a silken skirt. Juliet fled, and Gerald was left alone to meet the surprised gaze of his future mother-in-law.

CHAPTER XXI.

AN ENGAGEMENT.

GERALD saw by Lady Yorke's face that she guessed something of what had happened; he had no motive for keeping her in suspense, so he asked frankly:

"Lady Yorke, will you accept me for your son-in-law?"

My lady was not displeased at this abrupt question, she was too glad to learn that her designs were accomplished, and a protector secured for her daughter in the adversity that threatened them, she answered gravely:

"If Juliet wishes it?"

"She is willing to trust me," returned Gerald, "and I will do my best to make her happy."

The mother saw at once what Juliet had not suspected, that there was no eagerness or ardour in Captain Yorke's suit; but my lady thought him incapable of strong feeling, she judged him as many others did, to be brave, honourable and true, but cold and reserved even on the subjects which touched him most nearly.

She knew he did not love Juliet as she understood the word, but she believed he had for her a calm, placid affection as strong as he was able to feel for any woman, and therefore she rejoiced with all her heart that her child would be safe under his care.

But a shadow of remorse troubled her that he should be so deceived in the fortune of his future wife, besides she knew that to awaken his pity for

Juliet would be to give her a firmer hold on his heart; she said earnestly:

"Captain Yorke, before you speak to my husband of your wishes, I must tell you a secret. Sir Roland ignores it, Juliet does not suspect it, it is mine alone, but I cannot be so base as to deceive you."

Gerald was amazed!

What relation awaited him; what secret could affect Juliet unknown to her father?

He had never seen Lady Yorke so agitated, not even when in the Giant's Valley she had bent over her daughter believing that she was childless; he answered quickly:

"I seek to know nothing, Lady Yorke. I respect your daughter too truly to doubt that she deserves all happiness."

"I would rather tell you," repeated Lady Yorke, in a voice hardly audible from her emotion, "only keep my secret, above all, from my husband and child. We are ruined; there is every prospect that instead of being an heiress, Juliet will be left penniless at her father's death. Ask me nothing; it is a mystery I cannot explain. I tell you that you may not reproach me afterwards with the deception."

Gerald was surprised, for although tales of Lady Yorke's extravagance had often reached him, and it was rumoured that her profession was becoming a serious difficulty to Sir Roland, he had always believed the baronet's capital had remained untouched; from my lady's confession such could not be the case, and frequent inroads must have been made in the once splendid fortune. It was not Gerald's place to reproach his future mother-in-law for the reckless expenditure that had consumed her child's heritage; but he wondered Sir Roland had been kept in ignorance, and wondered still more at Lady Yorke's confidence, he had not expected such frankness from her.

"I thank you for your candour," he said at last, "but Juliet's prospects cannot change my intentions. I hope to surround her with all the comforts to which she is accustomed, and I beg you to believe, Lady Yorke, that no loss of fortune can make any difference in her position as my honoured wife."

"I do believe it," answered Lady Yorke, fixing her splendid eyes on his face. "I know that if ruin comes you will never let it touch her. I am glad this place is secured to you that it may be her home."

"Pardon me, Lady Yorke, but if your affairs are really so desperate, how is it possible Sir Roland is not aware of it?"

Her secret weighed on Lady Yorke like an iron band, it tortured her night and day, to bear it alone was agony; she would tell something of it to this man, the future husband of her child, not enough for him to betray her; anyhow this half-confidence would relieve her aching brain.

"You will not betray me if I tell you," she urged, clutching imploringly at his hand.

Gerald grew seriously alarmed; this scene of wild entreaty was so strange, the woman before him so different from the beautiful, brilliant Lady Yorke of Belgravia; how fearfully she had changed since the summer. Could it possibly be this secret which had altered her?

"Lady Yorke," he began gently, for her distress moved him to pity, "if I can help you in anything, tell me how, if not, keep your secret, and I promise that what you have already uttered shall never pass my lips."

"I was poor when my husband married me," said Gertrude Yorke; "you cannot tell how hard it was for me to be poor, I had every taste for luxury, and if I had been born rich, I believe I should have been a better woman, my mind would not have been so narrowed by the perpetual struggle to make my way. My husband was a widower, I daresay you know that; for his own part he was far from wealthy, but he had his wife's fortune, seven thousand a year."

We were married, we went to London. I ceased to exist, and began to live, I spent our income liberally. I seemed at last to be in my natural sphere, all my husband's private fortune was swallowed up, then only remained his first wife's portion, for his father, believing him amply provided for, let all he had for the absolute use of his wife, and Lady Frances can begueth it to whom she will.

"But you still have the property of the first Mrs. Yorke," Gerald could not help observing; "affairs are not so bad as you think."

Lady Yorke came close to him.

"Have no fear for yourself," she said, hoarsely, "the estate and title are lawfully Sir Roland's and will as lawfully be yours, but we are ruined, our fortune is not ours, there is a nearer heir."

Gerald would have declared it impossible that a childless woman could have no nearer heir than her husband, but he saw that Lady Yorke firmly

believed in her misfortune, and all attempts to console her would have been useless; for his own sake he had no anxiety, he would almost prefer that Juliet should owe everything to himself, though all would be a poor substitute for the love he could not give her; Lady Yorke eagerly waited for his answer.

"I still think you are over anxious," he said, gravely; "but Juliet will be safe with me from all pranks of fortune, and if the trouble comes you seem so to fear, I trust Sir Roland will remember that, as the husband of his only child, I have earned the right to be considered as his son. But, Lady Yorke, believe me you are troubling yourself without cause. A fortune that your husband has enjoyed for twenty years, especially coming to him from his wife, must be his."

"I hope so," said Lady Yorke, brokenly. "Thank you. Ah, I shall be easy now; if you knew how I have suffered!"

He guessed something of it from her changed face and enfeebled health; he dimly understood that to this woman wealth was a dear necessity, and that she could conceive no greater misery than to lose it. Poor thing! She had suffered terribly. He forgave her freely her old scorn of himself, and pitied her deeply, even while he rejoiced that her daughter so little resembled her.

A very different reception awaited him from Sir Roland, to whom he went on leaving my lady. The father had learnt something from Juliet, for he wrung his kinsman's hand, and said, warmly:

"There is no one to whom I would rather give her. Be tender with her, Gerald; she is so used to love, and she is my only child."

"I will do all I can to make her happy."

He had made this reply alike to father and mother, but it was singular that, with Lady Yorke, he had played rather the role of disinterested generosity, but with Sir Roland he thoroughly felt the purity of his wooing, and how miserably little he offered Juliet in exchange for her young, fresh heart. This may have been because all my lady's fear had been for her daughter's temporal welfare, which he could amply assure; while Sir Roland's first anxiety was her happiness, which money could not buy, nor comforts replace.

Gerald Yorke never forgot that night. How different all was to that of his first engagement; how indignant he would have been then had any one foretold that three months after he would be the accepted suitor of another girl, and thus have placed an insurmountable barrier between him and his first love.

(To be Continued.)

SCIENCE.

THE MANUFACTURE OF MILK SUGAR.

A. SAUTER, in a communication to a contemporary, gives an account of a visit to Marbach, in the canton of Luzern, Switzerland, where half-a-dozen refineries are said to make a handsome income from the manufacture of milk sugar.

The raw material used for the recrystallisation comes from the neighbouring Alps, in the cantons of Luzern, Berne, Schwyz, etc.; a considerable quantity is supplied also by Gruyères. It is the so-called Schottensand or Zuckersand, the French déchet de lait, obtained by simple evaporation of the whey after cheese making. Notwithstanding a continual rise in the price, consequent upon the demand and the increased cost of labour and fuel, the manufacture continually expands, and now amounts to 1,800 to 2,000 cwts. yearly, corresponding to a gross value of about 60,000 dols., certainly a handsome sum for a small mountain village with but few inhabitants.

The manufacture is only carried on in the higher mountains, because there the material can no longer be used profitably for the fattening of swine, which are found chiefly in the valleys; and the wood required for the evaporating process is cheaper in the highlands.

The crude material is sent to the manufacturer, or refiner, in sacks containing one or two hundredweights. It is washed in copper vessels, and dissolved to saturation at the boiling temperature over a fire; and the yellow brown liquor, after straining, is allowed to stand in copper-lined tubs or long troughs to crystallise. The sugar crystal form in clusters on immersed chips of wood, and these are the most pure, and therefore of rather greater commercial value than the milk sugar in plates which is deposited on the sides of the vessels.

In ten to fourteen days the process of crystallisation has ended, and the milk sugar has finished growing. The crystals are then washed with cold water, afterwards dried in a cauldron over a fire, and packed in casks holding four to five hundredweights.

As the Schotensand can only be obtained in the summer, the recrystallisation is not carried on in the winter, hence a popular saying that the milk sugar does not grow in the winter. The entire manipulation is carried on in a very primitive manner, it being a matter of astonishment to find a specific gravity instrument in any place. The author is of opinion that with a more rational method of working a whiter and finer quality of sugar could be produced.

SECOND BRIDGE BETWEEN NEW YORK AND BROOKLYN.—The projectors of this proposed bridge over the East River, between New York and Brooklyn at 77th Street, by way of Blackwell's Island have, in response to the invitation sent out, received ten separate designs and estimates from as many engineers. Ground will be broken as soon as a plan shall be decided upon. The preliminary specifications call for an approach on the New York side of 4,580 feet, 1,000 feet of which is to be in form of a tunnel extending from Fourth to Lexington avenues. From the end of the tunnel, an iron superstructure, curving to the centre of the blocks between 76th and 77th Streets, and thence direct, leads to the river. From the pier on the brink of the river, Blackwell's Island will be reached by a single span of 734 feet. An iron structure 700 feet long will then lead over Blackwell's Island, and the channel between the island and the Long Island shore will be spanned by a single arch of 618 feet. The shore approach on the Long Island side will be 3,900 feet in length. This will give in all a total length of 10,532 feet, or nearly two miles. A single track tramway will run across the bridge. There will be, in addition to the main approaches, two auxiliary ones, one from Avenue A on the New York side and the other from Vernon avenue, Long Island city. The spans are to be 135 feet above mean tide water. Double passenger elevators are to be placed at the piers on each side.

THE TARGET FOR THE 81-TON GUN.—Preparations for the final stage in the programme laid down for testing the powers of the big gun are now complete, and nothing of importance remains to be done now that the huge weapon is removed to its new position on the marshes at Shoeburyness, where it will be tried for penetration. The shipment of the gun was effected at high tide on Tuesday. The target, upon the erection of which a body of Engineers, under the direction of Major Lambert, R.E., has been busily engaged for some months, is a work of considerable strength, and the forthcoming trials, which will be designed to test the power of the weapon in penetrating this mass of iron and wood-work, will be watched with an interest that has not been lessened by the recent anxiety as to the serviceable condition of the gun.

A NEW SOURCE OF ILLUMINATION.—Between Bordeaux and Bayonne, in France, there is a large stretch of sandy desert, whereon there is little vegetation save here and there patches of pine trees. From these trees there runs a resinous matter, which is collected and sold by the inhabitants of the region. This substance has recently been studied by M. Guillemare, and he now announces, to the French Academy of Sciences, that he has produced three kinds of oil from the material, all rich in carbon containing respectively 80, 90 and 92 per cent. of that element. The light yielded on burning the oils is remarkable for its whiteness and steadiness and is said to be suitable for lighthouse illumination and even for photography.

A PECULIAR process of hatching eggs, an American contemporary tells us, is adopted in China. The eggs are placed in tiers in large baskets, twice the size of an ordinary barrel, thickly lined with hay, and carefully closed from the air by a tight fitting cover of twisted straws. In three days' time the eggs are taken out and replaced in different order, those at the surface being put in the lowest tier. This is repeated every third day for a fortnight, when the eggs are removed from the basket and placed on a shelf in another room, being carefully covered with bran. In a day or two the chicken chips the shell and makes its appearance in the world. The success of the method is attributed to the fact that the animal heat of the eggs being retained by the basket, which is formed of materials not conducting caloric, is sufficient to support animal life and foster its development.

AIR DRYING FOR ELECTRICAL PURPOSES.—In the apartment of the new edifice erected in Oxford, allotted to the experiments in electricity of high tension, an apparatus of remarkable ingenuity has been provided for keeping the air of the room dry. This apparatus consists of a heated copper roller, over which passes an endless band of flannel; the roller is heated by means of gas lights within it, which, being constantly burning, cause every part of the flannel to become hot. The vapour which arises from the heated flannel is carried off by the current of air which supplies the burners inside the roller. The flannel, when thus dried and cooled, passes into the open air of the room, where it again absorbs moisture, and thus the air of the room becomes so dry that the electrical instruments are preserved in a highly insulated condition, admirably meeting all the requirements of the case.

HIS EVIL GENIUS.

CHAPTER XXXVI.

WHEN I had escaped from that sad and painful scene which I have described, I must have walked up and down and round the streets of Florence for some two or three hours, at least, without caring, thinking, or even knowing where I was, or what I was doing.

It was already quite dark, when my grief, or, I suppose I may as well say more truly, my anger, began to cool down from its high-pressure state sufficiently for my mind again to take cognisance of ordinary impressions.

The few straggling dim street lamps were lighted, and a few heavy slaps of large rain-drops on my hat and coat sleeves, accompanied by a distant rumble of thunder, suggested to my natural instinct of self-preservation that, besides the fact of its getting very late, a heavy storm was working up overhead; and that having come out as I had without an overcoat or protection against such a contingency as a ducking, perhaps the sooner I found some place of shelter from the threatening downpour the better it would be, particularly in the quasi invalid state of health in which I was still supposed to be.

I was not far, as I discovered upon looking round, from the centre of the Ponte Vecchio, where there is a space left open between the rows of little jewellers' shops which line each side of that quaint old bridge, covered overhead, however, by a long narrow passage, or "bolt-hold" of communication between the Pitti Palace and the Uffizi; especially constructed for the use of the Grand Dukes or other powers that be, as a way of escape whenever their misfortunes or misgovernment may, as periodically occurs, have made the place too hot to hold them, and it may be necessary, as it so often has been, to out and run from their beloved subjects.

The said passage is carried over at the place I mention on three narrow arches, which afforded me perfect shelter from the now fast dropping rain.

There, then, I leaned over the parapet of the bridge, watching the river, rushing as it was with tremendous force against the piers beneath me; and as I watched I felt more thoroughly miserable and low spirited than up to that time I think I had ever felt in my life.

I could not help contrasting my mother's strange and unjust suspicion and treatment of me, with the uniform love and kindness I had up to that time always received from her—and all owing to Gories, without hope of vengeance or redress against the arch enemy!

What had I ever done? Why should I have been born?

By what combination of chances, or for what special end could it be, that my whole fate and destiny should at every turn be thus subjected to this hateful antagonistic influence?

Why should that little monster have been sent into this world specially, as it seemed, to cross and torment me at every turn?

And so I felt it would ever be to the end. A thought of hopelessness, of desperation, came over me.

Why not give it up as a bad job, and put an end to the whole bother—finish the struggle, in fact, with one good header into the rushing, gurgling waters below?

One hearty jump with a will, and it would all be over for ever!

I involuntarily looked round, to make quite sure that I was alone, and there, close to my elbow, stood a figure, who looked as if he had but that moment arrived, seeking shelter, as I myself had done, from the rain, under the arches.

He made me start, because I had no idea of any one being so near me.

I had not heard the slightest sound of his approach; but the river was roaring loudly through the bridge, and there had been, just as I turned, a tremendous roll of thunder overhead.

"Pray don't be alarmed," said the stranger, in English, "I beg you. Am I not right in supposing that I am addressing a fellow countryman? How one always recognises an Englishman immediately, all over the world! We way indeed reckon ourselves lucky to have found this place of shelter; in a few minutes the storm will be coming down in torrents!"

The voice, which had a would-be fashionable drawl in it, seemed familiar to me; and, just at that moment, there was a vivid flash of lightning, by which the face and figure of the speaker were rendered as visible as if it had been in broad daylight.

I felt sure that I knew him perfectly, but for the life of me I couldn't put a name to him; though so certain was I that it must soon recur to me, that I avoided the gaucherie which one always feels on such occasions of confessing my stupidity.

He evidently did not perceive the real fact, as he went on talking in a familiar know-you-at-home sort of style:

"When I first saw your back there, stretching over the parapet as you were just as I gained this shelter, I half thought it was some poor fellow, down on his luck, meditating a bold jump, and an end to all his earthly troubles; not a bad opportunity for that little game either, to-night. The Arno is not often so full or so rapid as it has been these last few days. As a general rule, there would be more chance of knocking your brains out, in a slovenly, unsatisfactory manner, against the gravelly bottom, than mingling your last bubbling sign of life with the rushing current, and so, with one splash and a gurgle, whirling away into eternity."

What on earth was the fellow's name?

His peculiar expression as he gave vent to this half satirical sentiment, the drawing tone of his voice, were so familiar to me, I was quite angry with myself for my own thick-headedness.

"It is not as high as the parapet of Windsor Bridge, from which, I daresay, you have taken many a header, when you were an Eton boy," he said, looking carelessly over, down in the water.

"That is exactly what I was thinking myself," I answered, involuntarily. "I know I should strike out instinctively, and couldn't help swimming; as I should only get a ducking for nothing, and perhaps catch a deuce of a cold into the bargain."

"Oh! you were seriously thinking of it, then?"

Then I saw what a slip I had made.

"Not yet, not yet!" he cried, showing his teeth as he laughed; "you must not allow such thoughts to get the better of you. It would be no use, only a disagreeable ducking, as you say, for you have a deal to go through, before things come to that pass. Ah! the storm is over! Good evening!" and he was gone.

Then it suddenly flashed through my mind who it must be—the identical party himself whom the professor had conjured up at Dresden!

I felt rather confused, I confess; but it gave me a new train to my thoughts.

But not caring for the chance of running against the gentleman again, I made up my mind to leave the bridge by the opposite end to that by which he seemed to have gone, and so make a "gyro" home, by making my way along the paved quay which they call the Lung d'Arno, and so cross the river again by the next bridge, some few hundred yards below; and thus, having reached the house where we lodged, manage, if I could, to get quietly up to my own room, without meeting my mother again that night.

I did not wish, I did not dare to meet her again till both of us should have had a night's rest to cool, and reflect upon the unfortunate misunderstanding, as it literally was, which had risen between us.

Though the storm, heavy as it was, had only after all lasted but a very few minutes, it had been sufficient to drive all the natives, who hate wet like cats, into their houses, and the streets were unusually empty and deserted.

When arrived at the nearest bridge, the Ponte Sta Trinita, I think they call it, I could perceive a single figure loitering in the middle.

Fancied it might be the same "party" again, or at any rate notated by a sort of nervous disinclination to meet any other mysterious individuals that evening, I turned off and kept on by the quay to the next bridge again further on below.

Just as I was passing beneath the windows of the smaller private houses close to the great Corsini palace, I heard the notes of a piano beautifully played, and accompanying a rich contralto voice to

one of the merriest, rollicking airs I ever listened to in all my life.

My senses were not, as you may easily judge, much in tune for those sort of feelings just at that moment; but there was something so heart-stirring, so wickedly bewitching in that barcarole as it suddenly burst out clearly over the silent street, that then and there I found every pulse in my body beating, and my feet actually going of their own accord pat to the lively music.

I had never heard that tune before, and never except once again, and that was on a very remarkable occasion, and at the very last place in the world one would have expected to do so; but it made such a vivid impression upon me that I could whistle every note of it from that time to this, and in my sleep have often and often set the jolliest songs imaginable of my own to it, and sung them too; but when the mornings come have invariably forgotten them entirely;—and what a regular nuisance that is, you know!

I was so intensely delighted and attracted by this song that I could not resist clambering up on a big stone post there was just beneath the window to catch a glimpse of the charming singer, whose voice itself was quite worthy of the song.

The window was wide open, so that catching hold of the bars of the sort of cage by which all the lower casements of Italian houses are invariably defended, I balanced myself on the top of my post of observation, and could see perfectly into the room, which was one blaze of light from many candles.

And there, at the piano on the other side of the apartment, I instantly recognised—whom do you think?

"La Contessa Sotte-Nebia herself, in magnificent full evening costume, surrounded by a large and brilliant company of many well-dressed gentlemen; but not another lady besides herself was to be seen.

There was a sprinkling of white Austrian uniforms amongst them; but most conspicuous of all, because perched upon the high centre cushions of an ottoman in the midst, was Master Gorles himself, vociferously leading the applause as the contessa finished the rollicking song with a bang and a flourish, and then turned herself round on the pivot of her music-stool to face her justly delighted audience.

Gorles was in a screaming state of ecstacy.

"Brava! brava!" he yelled again and again.

"Ancora! mi bella contessa! Ancora! brava!"

"Brava!" I cried suddenly, at the top of my voice through the window bars, right into the room.

It was an irresistible impulse of genuine admiration and delight, which I could not have helped if I had known that anyone would have cut my tongue out the next minute for my rudeness.

"Brava, contessa! pray let's have it again! By all means, I say encore!"

Up they all jumped, as if a lighted cracker had bounced in amongst them.

It was unwarrantable on my part, I cannot but own, and so I felt it to be at the time, almost even before the last words were hardly out of my mouth.

There was a momentary pause of astonishment, then some of the party rushed to the window-bars, while two or three of the white-coated swells made a plunge at a chair in the corner, on which they had deposited their shakos and swords.

I do not think that I am boasting when I say that if they and their weapons had been the only consideration, my pride would not have let me run away as I did, but I should have stayed to have explained and apologised, or to have taken the consequences of my unjustifiable conduct; but when I saw little Gorles spring from his high perch and make at once for the door of the apartment, that quite unnerved me.

I jumped down from my post, and was off like a shot, and, as I say, took to a most ignominious flight.

I feel ashamed, as I ought to be, while I thus make this confession of my weakness; but I know that I should do just the same if it were all to happen over again; chiefly because I could not help myself.

I was down to the corner and right across to the other side of the bridge in less than three winks, and then, being pretty well out of breath, I stopped for a minute to recover myself; when, to my horror, I discovered that I had lost one of my gloves in my flight.

I had them both, I know, when I clambered up on that post, and must have dropped it jumping down.

Of course I had—and Gorles must have run out after me, and picking it up, felt that it was unnecessary to follow in pursuit, for that he could have

whoever was the delinquent entirely in his power without further trouble.

Of course he had.

And then the terrible thought struck me, of how long it would be before I should again feel his infernal influence working over me!

I almost made up my mind to go back at once boldly to the house, or, regardless of consequences, attempt to recover it by force.

It required no little resolution to come to that point, but it was my only chance, and must be done without further delay.

I had turned to recross the bridge, when I became suddenly conscious that it was already too late.

It was the old feeling I had before experienced under similar circumstances at Dresden. I was trembling violently all over, and my head was beginning to whirl.

It was barely three hundred yards, up only one short street, to our house; I might yet manage to get home.

I made a strong effort to collect myself, and set off to run.

For fifty paces or so I staggered along, my legs giving way under me at every step, and I was sliding along on the splash, slippery pavement, which seemed to roll under me like a stormy sea—up again, and with a firm determination not to give in to the power which I felt more and more strongly growing over me.

With a desperate struggle and a cry for help, as of one suffocating, I fell against the doorstep of our own house; and was carried up to my bed by our courier, and some native friend of his, whom I suppose he had been entertaining, and providentially at that very moment coming to let out surreptitiously from the front door.

It was two or three days before I was all right again, under the auspices of the learned Dr. Zanzani, who though an old gossip, and pompous humbug, knew what he was about in my case, and I have no doubt secretly demagnetised me in the same regular manner that the Dresden professor or Taraxacum would have done, though he did not choose to avow it, and indeed always pretended entirely to ignore everything of the sort.

What I rather liked in old 'Zani was, that when I got him quietly to myself he was amenable to reason, and would always listen to me.

I told him exactly all that had really happened to me, and besought him to go to the house, which I described to him, and there obtain from Gorles, either by persuasion or force, that glove of mine, through means of which the little wretch would I feared be again constantly exorcising his hateful influence over me.

He promised to do all he could, but told me that now understanding the exact state of the case, if I would put entire confidence in him he could always thwart at once any such attempts, and that I should soon grow strong and well again as ever.

As to my poor dear mother—well, these are only distressing, miserable memories; and though I have said I will tell you all, there is no use in dilating on them,—nothing would ever persuade her but that I went off from her that night to some carouse, jovial party, or, even worse, that I spent the evening with that confounded contessa, and had returned home in a state of gross and wilful intoxication; whereas, as I have just told you, I had been mooning about the streets and bridges, without having touched anything, or spoken to a single soul with the one exception of the stranger on the Ponte Vecchio.

Appearances were certainly most unfortunately against me, rather strong circumstantial evidence, I own; for as I gathered from old 'Zani, who told me that he had almost to force my mother to come in to see me as I lay under the influence of Gorles's tricks that night; that when she had with evident reluctance consented to do so, no sooner had she approached my bedside, than, whether awake or in my sleep, he could hardly say, I had suddenly burst out with a wild incoherent song, following it with expressions of the most unbounded praise and admiration of some lady, upon whom I continued again and again to call for a repetition of her delicious and exquisite music.

From that time to this my mother has never allowed me to explain the real truth to her; even now, after this long interval of time, if I were ever to attempt to get near that unhappy subject, for I for some time afterwards laid all sorts of schemes and manoeuvres so that she might be induced quietly to listen to me, and allow me to clear myself—but all in vain!

I have failed again and again, for as soon as she perceives my drift and what I am at, no matter where we may happen to be, she will rise at once, and leave the room.

I tried the simple dodge of writing to her on the

subject fully and explicitly; but I only received my own letter back, with a large broad ink mark right across it, about half a dozen lines down the first page, with this chilling annotation scrawled across my writing below:

"Unread, further than this mark, as soon as the unhappy subject was ascertained. Why persist in these dreadful falsehoods? See Acts," such and such a chapter and verse. I forget the number exactly, but I know they referred to the story of Ananias and Sapphira.

Yes, it is a miserable thought, but it is a fact, that it was a foolish thoughtless speech of my own, of course acting involuntarily under the same infernal influence, which gave what I may call its final hopeless cleanness to that unlucky and most mistaken view of my dear mother's.

You see old 'Zani certainly behaved like a tramp in the matter. As he would listen to me freely, I easily convinced him of the real state of the case.

He really did his best to act as ambassador and peacemaker between us; but my mother never would allow even him to enter into details or particulars of explanation, until the old fellow, really from pure good nature, hit upon what must of course have seemed a very simple, but, as it turned out, most unfortunate scheme for satisfactorily proving my innocence.

He had talked to her, he told me so, so seriously, and so far impressed her with his own firm conviction that I could satisfactorily clear myself, that she had so far owned that she should only be too delighted if she could herself be convinced of the same; and he had thought of a scheme, and engaged that she should be quite satisfied.

With which little preface he produced a formal declaration, written out on a sheet of paper in my mother's own hand, to this effect:

"I, Francis Lombard, do hereby declare upon my sacred oath and word, as a Christian hoping for mercy hereafter as I shall now speak the truth before Heaven, that on the night of Tuesday, October (whenever it was), I did not while I was out from home, either see the Contessa Sotte-Nebia in her own home, or hear her sing, or in any other way hold any communication with her."

(To be signed.)

"Well, but, doctor," I said, just for the sake of something to say, "I cannot sign that, you know; because, as I have told you, I not only did see the confounded woman in what, I suppose, was in her own house, but did hear her sing that particular song, which, as you tell me, I have been singing ever since."

I had not time to say more, or of course, I should have gone on to explain how, in the true spirit of the declaration, I could conscientiously put my name to it like a man, though not as it happened in the letter; but with that foolish quibble in my mind, no sooner were those unlucky words out of my lips, than with a frightful scream my poor mother rushed out from behind the curtain, and dropped in a swoon upon the floor as flat as a flounder.

As bad luck would have it, you see, she, woman-like, had in her impatience followed the doctor into the room without his knowing it; ready, if she was, as he said, already half convinced, and hoping to be satisfied, to rush upon me and inundate my neck and shoulders with tears of reconciliation and contrition for her injustice towards her boy.

But that was all up now; and though I nursed her and watched over her, and did everything I could think of by dutiful attention and care to repay in part, at least, the kindness and affection with which she had tended me through my illness, and to win back her love and confidence, which up to that time had always been so strong, it has never been the same thing again.

As time has gone on we are now, thank Heaven, always cordial, and generally on fond terms, as a mother and son should be; but never, as I have told you, quite the same.

CHAPTER XXXVII.

You may well imagine that under such circumstances my days at Florence, and I am afraid those of my dear mother also (but that was not my fault) were not of the happiest or most comfortable. For my part, I should have been glad of a change anywhere, but circumstances constrained us to remain where we were.

In the first place, it was considered advisable, if not absolutely necessary, for me to remain under the immediate care of Dr. Zanzani, who had so wonderfully brought me through my illness, though I now began to feel myself well and strong again almost as ever.

I could never prevail on the doctor, by the way, to

tell me what my illness had really been. He always looked very mysterious, and evaded my questions by cautions for the future.

Besides that reason against our moving, there was the perhaps equally good, or even better one, if the whole truth must be told, that our finances had run rather low; and though I suppose my mother could easily have procured an advance from the bankers, yet my father had made no arrangements for her doing so, as he had been obliged to start off so suddenly for England upon family business, he had not expected to have been detained beyond a fortnight or so at the utmost; though it was now going on nearly seven weeks, and my mother had not even received a letter from him for some time.

My father was by habit anything but a regular correspondent; but as each morning arrived, and no letter, I saw that my mother was growing rather fidgety about him.

I could not get from her even a hint of what all this important family business was about; indeed, she would not be confidential about anything. She had to a certain degree resumed her naturally polite and gentle manner towards me; but not more so than it would have been with any other person in whose society she might have been living; so I on my part drew in my horns like the long-suffering snail; and having experienced one or two quiet, but very chilling rebuffs, took care not to lay myself open to more of that sort of thing than I could help.

It was certainly a weary time, and I was very unhappy. I did not care now to go out anywhere; I lost all pleasure in seeing or doing anything. I hardly stirred outside the house; the old dread of meeting Gerles again in the streets, or anywhere about, and of his bringing fresh miseries upon me, again over-shadowed me even with redoubled force.

But I determined to bear my lot as quietly and patiently as I could, though at times it was hard enough to do so; but I tried not to put myself in the wrong. Sometimes I was almost inclined to pack up my traps and be off, I didn't seem to care where, if I could only get away somewhere for a change.

But I hadn't a stiver of money in my pocket; and besides, I could not, you know, unkindly and unjustly as she was treating me, quite make up my mind to leave my mother all by herself in a strange city, with no one to take care of her. So our days dragged on, slowly and miserably enough, and still no letters, and my mother was growing more and more uneasy.

It was on a Saturday, I remember, that, looking up suddenly across the breakfast table at which we were sitting moodily, as was now our general wont, only rather later that morning even than usual, "Frank," said my mother, "I wish to goodness you would go yourself for me to the post-office, and see whether there is really no letter from your father. Farlanti (that was our courier's name) has just come back, and declares that there is nothing again; but these servants are so careless. I wish, my dear boy, you would just go and inquire for me yourself."

There was a tone of warmth and loving earnestness in my mother's voice, which was more like her own dear self than she had been since our row, which touched me to the heart.

"Yes, dearest mother, I cried, quite cheerily; "I will be off directly, of course. There is nothing I won't do to please you if you will only give me one of your old loving kisses, and tell me that you don't really believe me to be the profligate and story-teller you have been making me out to be."

I saw in an instant what an idiot I had been thus to presume upon what I had fancied was a change of feeling. It was an involuntary slip on her part of natural affection, but not for me though; and the hardness of her eye, and extreme coldness of her next words, told me at once what a mistake I had made. I ought to have had the tact not to have pretended to have noticed that momentary weakness. She might herself not have perceived it, and checked it as she did immediately in the bud.

"For your father's sake," she said, with a special stress, "I shall feel much obliged if you will take that trouble for me, for I am becoming really very anxious."

I am not sure that it was not for a moment a hard matter to choke down the ugly word that rose in my throat as, ramming my hat down over my eyes, I hastened out of the room; and scarcely allowing myself even to think, was soon across the Ponte Vecchio, and turning into that irregular great space known as the Piazza Gran Duca, on the sunny side of which is, or was in those days, situated the post-office.

As I came nearer, I was a little surprised to perceive that the small orifice or trap door in the grated window through which communications are, or then used to be, made with the official within, and which

at the outside might have measured about a foot square, was entirely blocked up by the body of some youth of the upper class, as far as one could judge from a pair of well-dressed and well-boiled legs and feet, the violent kicking and contortions of which said extremities betokened a desperate struggle, in which the remaining and visible portion of the said person was evidently engaged with some antagonist, probably, and as it proved to be, the lawful denizen of the public bureau within.

I was just in time, as, wondering what was up, I ran to the spot, to witness the whole body come bundling out in a heap on to the pavement below, bringing with him a perfect avalanche of letters, which fell round him in all directions; then came flying out a small hat, but nearly battered out of all shape or recognition, close after which appeared a very flushed and furious countenance, uttering the most frightful maledictions.

This was no other than the outraged official himself, who, stretching his head suddenly through his little portal at the imminent risk of exhorting his own ears, in his vehemence actually spat upon the defeated Gerles as he lay wriggling on the stones beneath him.

(To be Continued.)

ST. PETERSBURG IN WINTER.

I WAS told when I first came that I could not judge of St. Petersburg at all till I had seen it in its winter garb. Well, the winter has set in with a vengeance, and I cannot say that the place is to me at all attractive. It is always snowing. With rare intervals of slush, it will probably snow and freeze from now till next April.

The Neva is blocked up with almost unbroken sheets of ice. There were people walking on it to-day; and I suppose, if this weather goes on, sledges will cross it before another week is over. In fact, we have regular seasonable Russian weather.

Snow always sounds pretty upon paper, and is a fertile subject of poetic metaphors; but in real practical life it is an unmitigated nuisance.

Happily for us, we in London have so little of the infliction that we hardly realise what it is to live in countries where snow is the order of the day. If you are to stop at home it does not much matter where you are so long as you are warm; but if you want to go out, you seem to me to be as badly off in St. Petersburg as you could be in any civilised community. Riding on horseback is out of the question, and walking for pleasure is nearly so.

If you have not heavy furs on you are frozen to death, nipped by the ice-cold wind, sent home to bed with toothache or rheumatism, or congestion of the lungs; if you muffle yourselves up warmly, you are obliged to crawl along at a snail's pace, groaning beneath a load of wraps, one of the chief advantages of which is that it breaks your fall as often—and it happens very often—as you slide full length upon the slippery pavement. In fact, if you wish to do anything more than cross the street, you must ride in a sledge; and sleighing, whatever may be its other advantages, most certainly does not supply the place of active exercise.

There is one arcade in St. Petersburg—a cross between the Lowther and the Burlington, and I think inferior to both—up and down which you can walk in three minutes; but literally there is no other place that I know of where you can walk in St. Petersburg during the winter months with any approach to comfort. Before I ever experienced a northern winter I used to imagine that skating must be a popular pursuit in countries where it froze invariably for months together.

I own I entertained a private conviction that skating, like hunting, or rowing in a boat-race, was one of those pleasures which, to nine of its devotees out of ten, is greater in the anticipation or the retrospect than in the performance. Still I thought that skating was the natural pastime of ice-bound countries. Experience of northern winters has entirely dispelled the illusion.

Here at St. Petersburg, for instance, skating was quite unknown till it was introduced a few years ago by some English residents. Since then it has become somewhat of a fashionable amusement with the court and the high society of the capital. But the Russian public has never taken to it at all. Moreover, I should in fairness add that, though there are vast fields of ice within close reach of the capital, they are so caked on with frozen snow that it is difficult to skate over them for any distance. In fact, so far as I can see, persons whose evil destiny compels them to reside at St. Petersburg this winter have nothing in the way of outdoor exercise or amusement to look forward to for the next five months except a series of chilly drives up and down the quays.

RICHARD PEMBERTON;

—OR—

THE SELF-MADE JUDGE.

CHAPTER XXIII.

WHEN Ellen O'Donovan was sufficiently recovered to be able to leave the infirmary, her first care had been to go to the lunatic asylum, and inquire after her unhappy mother-in-law. She had found Norah in the state that precluded all possibility of her removal from the care of her keepers, and she had been unwillingly obliged to leave the wretched maniac in their charge.

She made her few preparations, and with the two children and old Marian set out for her new home, which she reached in the second week in November.

Silver Creek farmhouse was built just upon the spot where the torrent reaches the foot of the hill, and flows under its shadow—a creek. It was a substantial cottage with a steep roof, broad lattice windows, and walls of various colours. The farm lay all around in fragments, a dilapidated barn and corn house, and an old quarter for the labourers, comprised the sum total of the outbuildings.

A small sum of money left Ellen O'Donovan for the purpose of repairing the cottage and farm buildings, by great economy in the outlay served also for the purchase of a few articles of necessary furniture for house-keeping.

And in one week after her arrival she was comfortably settled in the farm-house. Her family consisted of herself, her son, Willie Falconer, Sylvia Grove, and old Marian and her farm labourers—namely, Leonard Fox and his wife Mary, and their son and daughter.

Upon the whole, Ellen had nothing to complain of in her present lot.

She thought night and day of her absent darling, Honoria, but she knew that the child was in the best possible hands, and besides she had been advised by Mr. Goodrich not to demand her restitution, not to do anything in the premises until she should receive some communication upon the subject from Mr. Pemberton.

"For," said Mr. Goodrich, "that lady may still desire to adopt the child as her own, and if she does so, you cannot, my daughter, do a better thing for your little girl than to leave Mrs. Pemberton in undisturbed possession of her. By this time the little one has grown reconciled to her new home, and for her sake you had better deny the craving desire of your heart to see her, and not go there in case she should grieve to come back with you. It is, I think, your bounden duty to sacrifice your feelings to your better judgment, if you feel convinced her adoption would materially benefit her both socially and in a higher sense. I think Mrs. Pemberton eminently qualified to train up a child, and would again strongly advise you to leave her in Mrs. Pemberton's possession."

Ellen only half acceded to his views; to give up the child for ever—even for the child's good—was a great trial of maternal love; to voluntarily absent herself that the little one might forget her, seemed almost too much for human nature to bear.

Poor Ellen took the usual course of gentle and timid natures, she deferred her decision from day to day to see what would turn up, waiting for the action of Providence, she said.

It was in this state of mind Mrs. Pemberton found her when she came to visit her in the last week of November.

It was one of those warm, refulgent autumnal days, when we let the fire burn low, leave the windows open, and love to sit in the sun.

The two children had gone out nutting, and Ellen sat alone at her door, in the full blaze of the morning sun, listening to the song of the waterfall, watching the crystal flow of the creek, and the rich autumnal foliage of the woods on the opposite hill, and thinking what a serene and blessed day and scene this was, as she mechanically plied her knitting needles.

She chanced to raise her eyes, and, to her surprise, saw a lady equestrian, attended by a mounted groom, both carefully picking their perilous way through the foaming water along the narrow, dangerous ledge, between the foot of the precipice and the running creek.

While Ellen was gazing breathlessly with fear and wonder to see the rider's admirable management of the steed, the lady turned her head, and revealed the beautiful pale face and long black ringlets of Mrs. Richard Pemberton.

The noble horse struggled up the bank and ambled up to the cottage. The groom followed, dismounted, and came forward and assisted his mistress to alight from the saddle.

Ellen O'Donovan started up and ran to meet the lady.

"Your little girl is very well and very playful, Ellen," said Mrs. Pemberton, anticipating the mother's anxiety.

"I am very glad to hear it, Mrs. Pemberton, and very glad to see you," replied Ellen, as she opened the gate to admit her visitor.

"Yes, madam, especially after a rain when the river is swollen and the creek high as at present. Few would have ventured along that narrow edge—I was frightened to see you."

"My steed is as surefooted as a mule, my dear."

They walked on to the house and entered it. Ellen drew a large flag-bottomed chair to the fire, and as the lady drew off her gloves she cast an inquiring glance around.

The room and its furniture had all the characteristics of old-fashioned country cottages. It was a large, square room, with a low ceiling, with two broad lattice windows, and a door between them at the south front, and two narrow windows, with a door between them to the north; a small door leading into a bedroom at the east end, and a wide chimney at the west end, and the home-made rag carpet, and the white oak table, the flag-bottomed chairs, black walnut chest of drawers and round looking-glass, trimmed with evergreens—just the things that may be found in every old-fashioned farmhouse—comprised the furniture of this apartment.

But Mrs. Pemberton missed something as she looked round the room. She finally asked:

"Where are your children, my dear? I would like to see them."

"They are gone out nutting."

"Are your children well since the cholera, Ellen?"

"Yes, madam, perfectly well. You know that everyone who recovers from that dreadful disease has better health than ever before."

"I know. What are the ages of your children, Ellen?"

"My boy William Falconer is about six years of age, but he is so well grown you would take him to be eight. Sylvia is about four years old, but Sylvia is not my child."

"Oh! not your child, Ellen?"

"No, madam; she is an orphan; but she was the only child of my husband's cousin, Sidney Grove. Her parents died of fever on their way from Ireland. I have taken the child and will share my children's bread with her if it was the last crust, and it has often been a mere crust."

"It will never be so again, dear Ellen; you are very comfortable now."

"No, madam; it can never be so bad again, I trust; as you say, we are well provided for now, but it were otherwise and the last piece of bread were broken among us Sylvia would share it, for she is Willie's relation, and dear to me as my own, just as dear."

"I have no doubt of it, Ellen, it is natural. But, Ellen, why have you not been over to see me or your little girl, and why have you not written to me about her?"

"Mrs. Pemberton, my mind was so distracted about that same thing I did not know what to do."

"Why, my dear Ellen, you know there is no one but yourself who has a right to decide. You have doubtless heard from Sister Mary, Ellen, the hopeless condition in which you and the other children lay when I removed this healthy one to my house; it was better that I should have taken her for a time, Ellen, it probably saved her from contracting the disease, and made her comfortable, and now, my dear Ellen, she is at your disposal."

Ellen began to tremble. She thought she saw at once all the splendid prospects of her daughter melting into thin air. At last she said, in a disappointed tone, "I thought you wished to adopt her, Mrs. Pemberton?"

"And so I do, most devoutly, Ellen."

"Well, then why? Oh, does the child give you trouble?"

"No, Ellen, for the first few days indeed she grieved after you, but that must have been while you lay in the dead—in the infirmary, where she could not have been permitted to see you, of course. But after the first few days—you know the blessed elasticity of a child's heart—she grew very bright and cheerful, and now she plays about all day long, the blithest bird in the world—the very life of our old hall."

"Forgotten me so soon. Well, it is like a little

child, it is very well, I ought to be glad—I am glad. I hope I am—I believe I am," mused Ellen. Then she said, "Mrs. Pemberton."

"Well? my dear?"

"If you—if you wish to adopt her, oh dear me, do you love her, Mrs. Pemberton?"

"Very fondly and deeply, Ellen, she is a great comfort and delight to me."

"Mrs. Pemberton, if I give you my little child will you love her and do for her as your own? forgive me the question."

"If you will give her to me I will love her, educate her, and provide for her as if she were my own. I must have a child, Ellen—it is a necessity of my nature—and I prefer this little one because it seems to me that Providence laid her into my lap and because I have learnt to love her, and if you will give her to me I will do as I said and more also."

Ellen was sobbing bitterly, but it was because she had come to a resolution, and was shedding her last tears over it. And at last she raised her eyes to the saintly pale face of the lady and said:

"I will give her to you, Mrs. Pemberton. Heaven knows I would not do it to secure her mere advantages of rank and wealth, but I feel I can trust my child's higher interests with you, with more confidence than with myself. Yes, you may have her, Mrs. Pemberton, and I will keep entirely away, though that will be very hard."

These last words of Ellen's pierced the lady's bosom to the quick; her heart was bleeding for the self-sacrificing mother. She did not speak for some time, nor until Ellen asked her:

"Does that satisfy you, madam?"

Then she said, gently:

"My dear Ellen, I am not quite satisfied on your account that you should absent yourself entirely from the child. For myself, Ellen, I would not ask it of you. How could I, indeed, sympathising with your feelings as I do? I could not feel any jealousy of my little adopted daughter loving her real mother best; if such an emotion stirred in my heart, believe me, I should repress it as a bad passion. No, I would willingly have you come often to see your child; but, Ellen, gentlemen feel different upon these subjects, and I am constrained to tell you the conditions Mr. Pemberton made with me in consenting to my wishes in regard to this child. He also loves the little one, he is very fond of children. It has been said of him that the love of children was the only weakness in his great nature. I thought he would be considered a weakness. He dearly loves little Honoria. He will legally—understand me—legally, adopt her, give her his name and every advantage of his wealth, station, and social connexion, and now, Ellen, if you attach any value to these things, if you consider them any advantage at all, you may listen to the terms. They seem to our falling hearts hard terms, Ellen, but Mr. Pemberton considers them just, and I think it scarcely possible for Richard Pemberton to err in his judgment."

"He requires then that the child be entirely given up to us, and that you absent yourself from her presence long enough to fade out of her memory so that she may consider us her true parents; you perceive, Ellen, that his wish is to draw the child as closely as possible to ourselves, to make her exclusively our own as if she had been born ours. And I think he would be glad if he could deceive himself and every one else into the notion that she is ours. Well, Ellen, in exchange he will give her our name, position and wealth, and all the social advantages to be gained by them. It is for you to judge of their worth."

"Well, Mrs. Pemberton, as I said before, I would not part with my child merely to secure her wealth and position, but I know that in giving her to you, I also secure her better interests, her Christian and intellectual welfare. I repeat it, you may take her, Mrs. Pemberton, upon your husband's conditions, and I will stay away from her. It will be better for her comfort, too, poor little one! for if I were to go and see her and revive my image in her memory she would never be satisfied, she would have a divided heart."

"And you know, dear Ellen, you can hear from her every day while we are in the country, and twice a week after we go to the city, for whenever you write to inquire after her, Ellen, wherever I may be, or whatever I may be engaged in, I shall feel it an obligation to answer such a letter on the instant. And after a few years have passed, when Honoria has grown to think that we are her true parents, you will visit her as often as you please."

"Dear Mrs. Pemberton, I thank you, you are very good. And it seems to me that I am very weak and selfish to be letting fall these tears. But, dear lady, do not let my tears disturb you, believe me I am very

happy to think of all you feel and all you will do for Honoria, and this is but a transient grief of mine."

"And remember this, dear Ellen, that this is not irrevocable, that at any time in the future, if you should feel you could not abide by the terms, you can take back your child, though I do not think you will deprive us of her—you who have two others. And now, Ellen, I must leave you."

"But not until you get some dinner, indeed! It will be ready early."

"Indeed, my dear, I must set out almost immediately; I cannot risk your roads late in the evening."

"Well, then, you can certainly stop a few minutes for tea."

Mrs. Pemberton smiled and repeated herself, more for Ellen's satisfaction than her own. Ellen O'Donovan made haste and soon set a fragrant cup of hyson before her visitor.

After partaking of it Mrs. Pemberton arose, kissed Ellen, and departed.

CHAPTER XXIV.

Six years with their vicissitudes had passed over the lives of the two families whose interwoven fortunes form the subject of our narrative. Richard Pemberton, with great élan, had retired again from office; and with these fresh laurels upon his brow he would willingly have retired from public life; but almost immediately he was appointed Secretary of State.

And Augusta among the assembled wisdom and beauty of the world, was still what she had ever been by virtue of her imperial beauty, intellect and goodness, a queen of the truly "best society." At her house convened the most distinguished politicians, artists and authors, celebrated as much for moral and Christian as for intellectual worth, and many also found a cordial welcome there, whose names were only

In the unobtrusive paths
Of quiet goodness known.

After the early storms a deep calm had settled upon the lives of Ellen O'Donovan and her little family. They still lived at the cottage on Silver Creek, and were supported by the produce of the fractional farm.

Ellen O'Donovan was a very bad manager, or rather no manager at all. She knew little, because she cared little about farming. Hers was the life-long listlessness of a long lost hope. So that the days flowed on and her children did not suffer, she did not care. She never took the trouble to inform herself of anything connected with the farm. If she could tell a field of wheat from a patch of potatoes, it was the extent of her agricultural knowledge.

But for the invaluable services of Big Len, the farm and everything upon it would have probably gone to the auctioneer's hammer. But Big Len was fidelity and skill combined, and assisted by his strapping son little Len, faithfully worked the farm, such as it was, with a fractional field here, there and anywhere. The garden occupied the little space immediately around the cottage.

And very laboriously would old Big Len work in his garden, range about in his scattered fields, and very faithfully would he dispose of the surplus produce, and bring its price in money or goods to Ellen, which the latter always received upon trust without question. And such apathetic indifference would fall very discouragingly upon poor Big Len's faithful, affectionate heart, for he loved appreciation like other human beings. On receiving the cash at such times, Ellen would say:

"Don't you want some of this money, Len?"

And he would reply mildly and slowly:

"No, honey, I ain't no use for it as I knows of, I thank you," and walked away in his rags, with his crushed hat and broken shoes, but with his spirit clothed richly and beautifully with patience, humility and self denial, only sometimes saying to himself:

"Ef she on'y did but know what a wrastle we dem had to raise that crap 'o' wheat out 'n that there stony field between the ridges; and then, oh! ef she on'y would take some interest into things, an' know when I've made a fuss rate 'rangement!"

Old Moll, his wife, had the cows and the poultry under her charge. And the old woman looked as if she had eaten all the butter, eggs, and poultry she had ever raised or made—she was so large and fat. But many were the kegs of butter, baskets of eggs, pairs of fowls, great turkeys and geese, and sucking-pig, for roasting, that old Moll would put into the waggon to be sold when Big Len would be going to market.



[A GENTLE PATRONESS.]

Old Marian was the cook, house servant, spinner, and knitter to the little establishment. And she, too, frequently added, the work of her hands, half-a-dozen pair of coarse yarn socks to be exchanged at the village shop for two pounds of sugar, a pound of coffee, and a quarter of a pound of tea, or else for a pair of number seven girl shoes and a pair of number ten boys.

Old Moll's strapping daughter, Tiny, as she was called, was hired out, but often came home through the month to spend a night with her mother. And upon the whole the party in the kitchen were much more industrious, useful, and happy, than the party in the adjoining parlour, if Ellen's humble family room deserved the name.

Little change had come over Ellen's room in these six years. All in it was unchanged. But the humble furniture had suffered somewhat in the service. The carpet upon the floor and the blue blinds at the windows were somewhat faded, but the white oak table and the chip bottomed chairs were as good as ever, and the black walnut chest of drawers had become darker and more polished than before. And the only additional thing in the room was a black oak cupboard with glass doors that sat on the other side of the fireplace from the kitchen door.

Nor had Ellen changed much—a quiet, patient, unexcitable grief does not wear its subject out very rapidly. It is true that her white cheeks were thinner, but her gentle blue eyes were undimmed and her soft fair hair unaged.

Her life flowed smoothly and calmly along; its monotony would have been wearisome beyond endurance to anyone of less serenity of temperament. She passed her days in knitting and sewing and in teaching the children. She was very faithful in the discharge of this last mentioned duty.

Her simple recreations were an evening ramble with the children through the woods or up the mountain, a row upon the creek, where the water was smooth, an occasional ride with the children to the village to find some new school-book that they wanted, and an annual journey to the city to visit her wretched relative at the lunatic asylum.

Her only epistolary correspondence was with Mrs. Pemberton, with whom she exchanged a letter every month, and from whom she continually heard the most satisfactory accounts of Honoria, satisfactory except in one respect, that Honoria seemed to have forgotten that she had ever had any other parents than Mr. and Mrs. Pemberton.

Mr. Pemberton had legally and regularly adopted her. She was known only as Miss Pemberton, the only daughter and heiress of the great Richard Pemberton. She was the beauty, pride, and boast of all the singing and dancing schools, juvenile balls and parties, and "always Queen of May."

But in thus consenting to Honoria's premature entrance into the vanities, rivalries, and selfishness of a juvenile fashionable world, Mrs. Pemberton wrote that she had acted against her better judgment and in accordance with the customs of the city, and that now, having seen the effects of these amusements upon the mind and manners of Honoria to be anything but desirable, she should put a stop to it.

Ellen's children, nurtured under the severe but salutary discipline of poverty, seclusion, and self-denial, were as good and intelligent as they were beautiful.

Her son, Falconer O'Donovan, was a fine, manly boy of thirteen years of age. He was tall and slender for his years, yet of firm elastic frame, with nerves and sinews well strung for strength, agility and grace. He inherited the gipsy skin, black hair and eagle eyes of Norah.

No step was like his, his flashing glance, quick clear tones and agile spring were in unison. It was his delight to rise in the morning before the sun, with his light fowling piece, and return before the family were ready to sit down to breakfast, or at noon to sit under some broad, spreading elm, or upon some projecting point, receiving into his expanding soul the glory and the beauty of nature, or simply charmed with some individual effect of light and shade, trying to produce it upon paper, often throwing down his pencil with a tyro's disgust at his own awkwardness and failure, but oftener working on inspired with the young artist's exquisite sense of genius, and the thrilling presentiment of future fame and power.

But these were his lightest pastimes, and always finished with a sigh, as from an undefined consciousness that the work was unworthy and the time wasted. He wanted help, he wanted materials, he wanted instruction, he wanted encouragement. Deeply and strongly yet vaguely he felt the want of them. There was no spirit near him to bear witness that he was a child of art. He had learned all his mother could teach him.

The books at his command had been read, re-read, digested, and assimilated, and now his eager mind had only nature to feed upon, and that chiefly

nurtured his genius, and perhaps to that early deprivation of books and ministration of nature he was indebted for the singular originality, strength, independence of his mind. Let him alone, let him work his upward way through the doubt, gloom and obscurity of early life, like the sun through the darkness, clouds and fogs of early morning, until like the sun he shines upon the world in cloudless splendour.

But Maud, sweet Maud, sweeter now at ten years old than ever before, the child of Richard Pemberton and Augusta Percival, the child of genius and love, beauty and goodness, united and blended in perfect harmony. Her form was elegantly proportioned, with a finely shaped head and neck, a rounded chest, falling shoulders and rounded limbs, tapering towards the slender wrists and ankles, small feet and hands, whose finger ends were of the most exquisite delicacy of finish. Her every attitude and movement was the perfection of grace.

It has been said that there is no complete beauty without some unique trait. Now to a superficial observer, the unique of Maud's beauty was her luxuriant hair, which hung down to her waist in long sunny golden brown ringlets; her forehead was as fair and smooth as the polished white petal of the camellia japonica. Her eyebrows were slender black arches tapering away to the finest points, her eyes were of the clearest, purest, deepest blue, and shaded with long black lashes, her cheeks and budding lips were flushed with a delicate rare tint.

The only effect of the forest and mountain sun and air upon her beautiful complexion was to ripen its delicate bloom to a rich glow. But it was the heavenly beauty of the soul within that gave the wondrous charm to Maud's face. She was not a child of quick impulses or strong passions, her affections were quiet, profound, and eternal.

In self-reliance she seemed rather diffident, and in self-defence timid, but in the cause and service of her friends her resolution amounted to a total forgetfulness or disregard of consequences, and her courage would have seemed rashness but for her passionless, deliberate manner of proceeding.

An instance—a well-authenticated instance—will illustrate this. It was but a trifle in one respect, yet a thrilling adventure in another. It was a cause disproportionate to the effect, an occasion inadequate to the action. But it was like the child to do as she did.

(To be continued.)



[A SUSPICION OF FOUL PLAY.]

THE GOLDEN BOWL.

By the Author of "Dan's Treasure," "Clytie Cranbourne," etc., etc.

CHAPTER VI.

SIR PHILIP WALSHINGHAM'S DOUBTS.

THE news of Sir John Carew's death reached Walsingham Towers almost with the daylight, and was brought to Sir Philip directly he opened his eyes.

"Dead!" he exclaimed, starting up, "and yesterday he was alive and as strong as an old lion; poor fellow!"

And headed in a lower and tenderer tone:
"Poor Carrie!"

He was some time before he could quite realise the news, and when he did so his mind went off in uneasy speculation as to what difference this sudden loss would make in the position and prospects of his lady-love.

Not that he had any thought of deserting her, but for all that, disagreeable questions and surmises would force themselves upon his mind, questions which he had always expected Sir John would answer satisfactorily.

His very conversation of the previous day, with the now deceased baronet, left no doubt upon his mind that the mystery surrounding Carrie's mother had taken its origin, and was continued, rather on account of the old man's sensitive feelings on the subject, than because of any disgrace or dishonour attached to it.

But how this mystery and silence would now affect Caroline Carew he could not even guess. Sir John had evidently made no will, and when he suggested his doing so on the previous day with the view of securing Clovelly to his daughter's second son, the old man had evidently shrunk from any action of the kind, for he had the almost insane aversion which some people evince of making his will, as though the act could in any way shorten his earthly career.

Had he made his will, all would have been well, or the Clovelly estates were no longer entailed.

Sir John himself was the last of the male line, and there was a particular clause in the tenure,

giving him the power, failing legitimate issue, to will them to whoever he chose.

Sir Philip Walsingham could not eat his breakfast that morning, neither could he get the perplexing question of Carrie's prospects out of his mind.

If his worst fears were realised, and Carrie was declared nameless and penniless, could he marry her?

He asked himself the question and failed to answer it.

His sense of right and justice and honour as a man, and his love for her, which was very genuine in its way, said "yes," impulsively, "let her be nameless and poor and forsaken, all the greater reason that you should open your arms to receive her, and treat her with even greater honour than you would previously have shown, because she is, in a measure, at your mercy, and cannot demand it."

But then came his family pride to have a voice in the matter, and asked him how the wife and mother of a Walsingham should dare to bring the baronet's name upon the face of their escutcheon.

And so this devotee to love and pride tormented himself, not knowing what course to take.

He was noble and generous and very much in love, but oh! so prudent, and so proud of the name which he had done nothing to earn, and would never by his personal prowess, add to the glory of, that he hesitated at every step, as though a breath might smirch it—as though the brightest and preat diamonds were not those which no mud could tarnish or defile.

Had Carrie Carew known what was passing through Sir Philip's mind on this miserable morning, she would have considered that father and lover were both dead to her.

Sir Philip, however, had not come to that conclusion yet.

Bluntly asked the question, he would indignantly have repudiated the idea that he would retract from an implied promise any more than from a binding contract, but for all this, he was not quite as sure in his mind as though no cloud had arisen, and he did not deny to himself that circumstances might arise which would make his marriage with Carrie—yesterday his most intense desire—undesirable.

So human hearts delude even themselves as to the sincerity and disinterestedness of their motives.

Whatever the result might be, it was evidently his duty to ride over to Clovelly Court, inquire for

Miss Carew, and ask if under the distressing circumstances he could be of any service.

Walsingham Towers is five miles from Clovelly Court as the crow flies, but crows and horses go by different routes, and the country in this neighbourhood is so undulating and hilly that the birds in this case had decidedly the best of it.

Approaching the Court from a neighbouring hill you could not help being struck with its magnificences.

Built in a broad valley, it was not unlike in structure and design to Hampton Court, the favourite palace of King William III.

Four sides of a square enclosed the great courtyard, from which the building derived part of its name, the south side of this quadrangle being, as I have before observed, set aside for state and ceremonial occasions, while above the great gateway, which was always closed at night, stood the lion, which forms part of the crest of the Carews. A mansion to be proud of.

One that made Walsingham Towers look small, and Sir Philip as he came near it, breathed a sigh of regret, as he thought of the more than probability of his losing such a prize.

But a stillness that was unnatural hung over the whole place.

Every blind was down, every sound was hushed; the great gates, usually wide open, were closed, and only one of the side entrances was open.

His inquiries elicited the external facts of the case.

Sir John had died about ten o'clock last evening, Miss Carew was in bed ill, but Mrs. Kompton was up, though very much agitated, and if he wished to see her he could do so.

For a second he hesitated, then followed the servant, who led the way to her boudoir.

Coming out of the broad sunlight he found some difficulty in distinguishing any object for a few seconds in the dimly-lighted room, for, of course, all the blinds were down, and the figure seated there was in the deepest black.

She rose, however, and came towards him, and then he noticed that her face was pale and her eyes swollen; signs of grief, though no improvement to her appearance.

"Is it not awful?" she asked, giving him her hand, and crushing up a piece of cambric in her eyes. "So kind as he was, so thoughtful and just, and it has come so suddenly upon us. I have been crying all night."

And she sank into a chair, and again covered her face with her handkerchief.

"Yes, I am awfully grieved. He seemed as well yesterday as I am now; and Carrie, how does she bear it? She was so very fond of him, poor child."

"Ah, poor Carrie! that is the worst. I dread to think of it. Of course she always suspected, if she did not positively know, about her mother; and if uncle has not made a will, there will be a great change for her. Of course she can always have a home with me, poor dear."

"What was there to know about her mother?" asked Sir Philip, sternly. "To my knowledge she was ignorant of everything concerning her; where she lived, where she died, and even to what nationality she belonged. More than that, from something Sir John said to me yesterday, I cannot but doubt that his daughter has a legal right to all he died possessed of."

"Really! I am glad to hear it. Of course I was not old enough to know anything about it. My father was Sir John's younger brother. I can only judge by letters of my father's which I have, and he might have been mistaken, you know. Brothers don't always confide in each other; for myself, I would not wrong Carrie for the world, and if your surmise be not correct, it will be with the greatest reluctance I shall take what really is my own."

"It is somewhat premature to discuss the subject," returned Sir Philip, severely. "I always consider it little short of a crime for a man to neglect to prepare his affairs, so that death may not find them in confusion, when he knows so well too that he must die."

"Yes, but poor uncle had always such an abhorrence of the subject. He left the dinner-table quite angrily last evening, because I said he did not look well. Dear uncle, it was the last time I saw him!"

And she shivered and covered her face again, thinking of the silvered last time she saw her uncle, and haunted still by his rolling and reproachful eyes.

"It is very sad, but I am forgetting the object of my intrusion upon you. Can I be of any service, or do anything to serve you or your cousin? I suppose I cannot hope to see her at present?"

"No, she is very much shaken, the shock was so great. The stupid servants frightened her, and let her see him; thanks for your kind offer, I don't think there is anything that the servants and lawyers cannot manage. There is only Carrie, you know. The race of the Carews of Clevelly ends with us."

"So Sir John was telling me yesterday. I wish I had thrown that man over who dined with me last night and had spent the evening here. But it is too late to regret it; you will tell Carrie that I have been, and will send to me if I can be of any service, won't you?"

And shaking hands with her, he went away depressed and saddened.

The sun shone as brightly to-day as yesterday, but in those twenty-four hours the sunshine had been blotted out of Carrie Carew's life, and the man who yesterday asked her father for her, is now debating in his own mind whether he has gone too far to retract with honour.

When a man begins to count whether or not his honour will let him retract, his love need not be taken into consideration.

And yet in his own selfish way he did love her, and as heiress of Clevelly he would have thought he had won the most beautiful and lovable woman in the world for his wife.

As his wife also, even had this blow come after their marriage, she would have stood in his estimation above all other women, but now, penniless and nameless, a Walsingham could not wed her, that is if he can evade doing so without seeming dishonour.

Riding along, chewing the bitter cud of reflection, his horse left pretty much to its own devices, steed and rider are both startled by a man, who, out of the saddle, must stand nearly six feet high, calling to him from a neighbouring lane to pause, and a few seconds after the new comer has leaped the hedge, and is by Sir Philip's side.

"How d'ye do?" he said, frankly extending his hand. "I was coming on to your place when I spied you. Awful thing this about Sir John Carew, isn't it? Have you been there?"

"Yes, I am just returning; as I was such an intimate friend of the family, and there are only a couple of women, I thought I ought to ride over and offer my services; not that there is much to be done."

"I suppose not; how does she bear it?"

And Fred Monckton's handsome face was sad and full of sympathy as he asked the question.

"She? Which of them?" asked Walsingham, coolly.

"Carrie, of course; the other has no care but for herself and her lap dog."

"I did not see Miss Carew," was the reply, "she is keeping her room; ill in bed, I was told."

"Poor girl, it will almost break her heart; and yet it was almost to be expected; he was over seventy, an age when we all expect the sun we see rise to be our last. But I wanted to ask you something, Walsingham. You won't take it for impertinent curiosity, because I have a personal motive for asking, which you may easily guess. Are you engaged to be married to Miss Carew?"

Almost before he knew what he had said, Philip Walsingham answered:

"No, I am not!"

"Thanks," returned Monckton, with a flash of triumph in his face, "I knew you would tell me frankly. I never like to intrude on another man's preserves. Good morning!"

And so saying he turned away, and in a few seconds was out of Walsingham's sight.

"What an idiot I have been!" muttered the young baronet when he found himself alone. "I spoke without thinking. What business was it of his? Wants he himself? Bah! Carrie Carew will never be Frederick Monckton's wife; the heir to a Brummagan peerage, whose grandfather was a nailmaker, and whose father married his sister's governess; the shades of the Carews would almost rise up to forbid such a union!"

And then he remembered the far greater stain that it was supposed one of the Carews had brought upon the woman who loved him, and he rode back to Walsingham Towers depressed and melancholy.

And at Clevelly Court, with its late owner lying in state on the canopyed bed, and his daughter almost delirious with grief, Hilda Kempton, the murderess, was triumphant.

"I did that piece of acting splendidly!" she was saying to herself, as she regarded her own reflection in the glass, and pushed back her abundant black hair from her heated forehead. "On the stage I should make a fortune," she continued, "but I should have to work for that, and this is almost ready to my hand, with little more than the pleasure of spending it. I am sorry for Carrie, of course. Sir Philip will never marry me, I think that is quite certain, and I may make up my mind to it, but neither will he marry Carrie, I saw that in his face too; he is a mean cad! thinking of his stainless name, and yet doing such dirty deeds that a respectable costermonger might be ashamed of. It must have been almost settled between them yesterday, and now he will back out of it. I would do much to keep them apart, but the great danger is past! My uncle can make no will now, and if he was married, I do not believe that any proof remains. After all, I would not have been selfish; let me have Clevelly, and Carrie might have had Sir Philip, if he had been man enough to wed her, but he never will! Never!"

Poor Carrie! little does she dream of the terrible trials that are before her!

CHAPTER VII.

DR. BEARD VISITS LUTON PARK.

An odd story was being whispered in the servants' hall at Clevelly Court; a story which, taken in connection with the dead body of its late master lying in the stateliness of death in that gorgeous chamber above, was, to say the least of it, uncanny.

Bill Stacey had seen a ghost! Not a white ghost, dressed in a winding-sheet like an orthodox visitant from another world, but a black one, which emerged, according to his story, out of the window of Sir John Carew's study at half-past nine or thereabouts, just at the time of his death, and as the light shone upon the ghost it melted away like so much smoke and disappeared.

Such was Bill's story, and of the truth of it he had no doubt. Gradually as he watched this phenomenon his hair took an upward tendency and stood upright, his face became pallid, great beads of perspiration stood upon his forehead, his eyes stared until they seemed as though they would leave their sockets; for a few seconds his feet seemed rooted to the spot on which he stood, until terror overmastered every other consideration, he rushed headlong and speechless into the servants' hall, where, as a rule, he was only admitted on suittance, and stood jabbering incoherently, and as Mrs. Winstay, the housekeeper, who happened to walk in at the time, declared, "like an idiot."

Bill found the use of his tongue at last, but his story was received with incredulity and a sneer. He had seen something that frightened him, no doubt, but that he might easily do, his courage and nerves not being esteemed as of the highest order,

but as for a ghost, that was ridiculous, and a black ghost, too!

Mrs. Winstay's sharp observations, and the butler's opinion that Bill was a fool, for the time smothered the question, and though one or two romantic young kitchenmaids would have liked to entertain it they were silenced for the time being by the condemnation of their superiors.

The discovery of Sir John cold and dead in his study a couple of hours later roused the superstitious feeling that Bill's story had excited into something like awe.

"Could it have been the baronet's ghost that had been seen walking out of window?" the housemaids asked, and they nestled up closer to the tall footmen, who were big enough, at any rate, to afford them protection.

But other circumstances more suspicious than ghostly soon cropped up.

Carrie Carew's remark about her father not having drunk the wine struck Garston as well as Dr. Bristol, and the question as to what had become of it could be easily guessed at, otherwise how could that black pool that had oozed through the coal box on to the carpet be accounted for?

At this point the butler and housekeeper determined to keep their own counsel until they considered it time to speak, and not a hint of the suspicions that were hourly growing stronger, of foul play from some quarter or other, reached Hilda Kempton.

Dr. Beard, the family physician, who had always been called in to attend Sir John or Carrie when anything ailed them, was sent for early in the morning and was met by Mrs. Winstay, who told him she wanted him to see Miss Carew first, and then come to her room to talk with her.

"Yes, certainly," was the reply.

The old gentleman looked over his spectacles at the housekeeper's still good-looking, if not handsome, face.

He had known her for many years. The time once was, when he had thought of asking her to be his wife; but that was some time ago, when Carrie Carew was only four or five years old, and Mrs. Winstay, then a widow of some five and thirty, was the child's governess.

Since then more accomplished teachers had succeeded her, and she was very glad to accept the position of housekeeper which Sir John out of kindness, but with some diffidence, offered her, but she dispelled Dr. Beard's matrimonial intentions by so doing.

A governess he might have married; a housekeeper, not even a lady housekeeper, was out of the question. To have done so would have ruined his professional career, and he gave up the idea, not, perhaps, without a pang, all of which, Mrs. Winstay, happily for her own peace of mind, was ignorant of.

Carrie was in a highly nervous and excited condition, slightly feverish, too, and, after talking to her a little while, and prescribing some soothing medicine, Dr. Beard left her, promising to come again the next day; then he followed the housekeeper to her own private sitting-room.

"You'll take a glass of wine, doctor?"

"Thank you, yes."

And the wine—some of the best in the cellar—was produced.

"I should like you to see the poor master's body before you go away," said Mrs. Winstay, with some hesitation. "You knew him well, and will be able to say whether his death was quite—"

"Yes?" inquired the man of science, as she paused.

"Quite natural," she said, with a gasp.

Dr. Beard started.

"Do you suspect anything?"

"I should not like to say. If you will examine him I shall be more satisfied. I have kept the keys of the room. He is lying there as I had him laid out; it has been a busy night, and I am tired, but the undertakers will be here soon, and I want you to see him before anybody else does."

"Certainly; I will go at once; but is there anyone else who entertains a doubt like yourself?"

"Only one; and, you know, we may be wrong and should never forgive ourselves, if, through us, doubt was thrown upon anyone without cause, and who did not deserve it."

"I understand, and you know you may trust me. Who is it you allude to?"

"Garston, the butler."

"Call him."

A few minutes later, Garston, looking somewhat pale and nervous, came into the room.

"The doctor wants you to come with us to the room in which Sir John is laid out," said Mrs. Winstay, herself looking a little agitated.

"Yes; but I hope you have explained, ma'am,

that we don't know anything, and it's only that we are not quite satisfied. It would ruin us if any story got about, and there was no ground for it," said the man, in evident terror.

"You may trust to me. I shall decide for myself, and take the responsibility," said Dr. Beard, calmly, as he signified his desire that Mrs. Winstay should lead the way to the chamber of death.

In a room hung with blood-red satin hangings, the bed heavily draped, and the furniture covered with the same sanguinary hue, with nothing but unframed mirrors, surrounded with the same crimson tint, lay all that was mortal of Sir John Carew.

It was not his usual bedroom, on the contrary, tradition spoke of some dark deed which had been perpetrated in this apartment, and so great was the horror of it, that instead of being called the red room, it was usually termed the ghost chamber.

Mrs. Winstay unlocked the door with some trepidation, and it was evidently with extreme nervousness that she entered the room.

"Sir John was very kind to me," she said, by way of apology, half covering her face, but no one answered her, for Dr. Beard and Garston were already by the side of the corpse.

"Pull up the blinds and draw aside the curtains," said the physician to her, then looking up at the butler, he ordered him to uncover the body.

Very closely and critically did Dr. Beard examine the body of his late patient; then, when he had finished he asked Garston abruptly: "Who was the first to find him?"

"I was, sir; I went in to ask if he wanted anything before going to bed; I was going to look up for the night as it was more than an hour past his usual time for going to bed."

"And how did you find him?"

"Dead as he is now, sir," and then the man went on to explain the circumstances that had excited his and the housekeeper's suspicions, the empty decanter, the pool of dark liquid by the side of the coal-scuttle, the ink-stained fingers of the dead man and the absence of any writing under his pen, though it had evidently been used, and last but not least, Bill Stacey's story of a black ghost which he vowed he had seen coming out of the study window.

Dr. Beard's face became graver as he listened. "Have you examined the window," he asked.

"Yes, but there's no sign of its having been open, indeed, a spider has spun its web outside the window, and it couldn't have been opened without moving it; but the window of the next room has been left open all night and there are marks of footprints in the flower beds underneath, but they're scarce big enough for a man's. The footprints, to my mind, wouldn't count for much, most likely it was one of the maids slipping out to meet a sweetheart, it's the wine that troubles me."

"Nothing in the study has been touched, has it?" asked the man of silence.

"No, sir; we looked it up and kept the keys. Miss Carrie is, as you know, unable to give orders about anything, and we declined to take them from Mrs. Kempen; she wanted to go into the room this morning, to find a book, she said."

"I should say you had done quite right. Take me there, keep this door locked, and admit no one to see the body until you hear from me."

Then the trio made their way to the study. Everything was standing just as it had been left the previous night.

The empty glass and decanter, the chair in which Sir John had died, all awry, and the black pool by the side of the fire-place.

The doctor smelt the glass, the decanter, and then gathered, in a small empty phial, which he took from a case in his pocket, about a teaspoonful of the dark liquid, then he turned to the two servants.

"You will hear from me later in the day," he said, gravely, "in the interval, keep everyone, every person remember, out of this room and the one above. There are shutters to the windows are there not? fasten them up. Mind I look to you two that nothing shall be disturbed."

At which Garston looked frightened, but Mrs. Winstay replied firmly:

"You may rely upon us, sir, I will keep the keys myself; but please take the responsibility off us as soon as possible, it won't be a pleasant burden."

"I will lose no time, don't breathe a hint of anything," and so saying Dr. Beard departed.

"I have no doubt in my own mind, and yet I should like positive proof," he thought, as he was being driven from the Court, his first idea having been to call on the nearest magistrate, then he countermanded the order, and told his man to drive home.

Two hours later he came out of his laboratory, his face firmly set, his usually pale cheek flushed, and his eye looking keen and bright; there was no longer doubt or hesitation in his tone or manner.

"Drive as fast as you can to Luton Park," he said, as he entered his carriage. "I shall just be in time to catch his lordship at luncheon," he said to himself, "he won't thank me for disturbing him with such a business, but that is nothing."

Lord Luton was the father of Frederick Monckton, the young man who had met Sir Philip Walsingham but an hour before and asked him if he was engaged to Carrie Carew, or if the prize he himself coveted was still unwon.

Dr. Beard was right, his lordship was at luncheon when he arrived, and a polite message was sent to the doctor, asking him to join him.

But the business upon which the physician had come admitted of no delay, and he briefly scribbled words to that effect upon his card.

"What is it, doctor?" asked his lordship testily, as he came into the room where the man of science was impatiently awaiting him, "why couldn't you come in and have luncheon; I'm confoundedly hungry."

"So am I, my lord, but appetite must wait, I will not detain you long," and then, briefly as possible, he stated the object of his visit.

"Poisoned!" exclaimed the peer, forgetting all about his luncheon; "who could have done it?" The physician shrugged his shoulders. "That is what we have to find out, my lord. I was his medical attendant; I decline to give a certificate as to the cause of death, believing him to have died from the effects of poison; it is therefore for you as a magistrate to order an inquest to be held, and the matter to be inquired into."

"Yes, I see! I see! but what a dreadful thing, my old friend Sir John poisoned! who could have done it? You spoke of somebody being seen outside the window, it was that man that did it, you may be sure."

"But we don't even know that it was a man," objected the doctor; "the butler said the footprints were like those of a woman."

"That may be, though I don't believe it; but Godfrey Slocombe was in the neighbourhood of the Court yesterday, for I saw him as I was riding; he tried to hide himself and pretended to be fishing in the river, but I was determined to make sure of my man, so I stopped and spoke to him and asked him how I happened to see him in this part of the world again?"

"And what did he say?" asked the doctor, curiously.

"That he was going away from England to-day and had come to take a last look at the old place."

"Did he say where he was going?"

"No; I didn't ask him. He wasn't a man with whom one could be too curious or taken liberty with, you know, but he gave me an idea that he was going to the other side of the world. I invited him up here to look at some old manuscripts I have just bought, but he said he had no time to come. I thought it odd his being so near Clovelly, but I never believed he would do such a dastardly deed as this. Never!"

"I don't believe he did it," replied Dr. Beard, sturdily; "my suspicions travel in quite another quarter, but it is not your business or mine, my lord, to find out who is the culprit, what we have to discover is, has a crime been committed. If you will send a message to the coroner and superintendent of police of the district, I shall be grateful for the luncheon you kindly offered me."

"True, I had forgotten, but ought we not to arrest Godfrey Slocombe at once?"

"Arrest him on what charge? For being in the neighbourhood? I don't believe he is any more guilty of a crime than you or I, my lord; you would make yourself the laughing stock of the kingdom by taking such a step."

"For all that I believe he did it," said the peer, in some heat, as he sat down to write the notes suggested by the physician.

Meanwhile my readers are doubtless asking, "Who is Godfrey Slocombe?"

(To be continued.)

CONVERSATION AT TABLE.

A MAN cannot be hungry and amiable at the same time, and the sooner a woman learns this fact the better for her happiness. Just before dinner is the worst possible time to bother a husband with questions or complaints, or even with efforts to be aggressively agreeable. That is the time above all others when social silence should grace the home, and make it seem to the tired man the most delightful and restful place on earth. Half an hour of quiet just then is the best possible preparation for the social enjoyment of the coming meal, for then the nervous tension and mental strain of business care and

anxiety can be gradually relaxed, and the entire system brought into conditions for enjoying food and the amenities of social life. Yet how frequently does the wife choose that particular time to speak of her own trials and troubles, the misconduct of servants or children, the petty requirements of the household, or other things trivial or disagreeable, and then marvel that her husband's temper is not so sweet as it ought to be! The offence is worse even than introduction of such topics at meal time. That wife is wise who strives to render the dinner hour an agreeable one to her husband.

THE DIAMOND BRACELET.

CHAPTER LXI.

As Maya stood inside the gate after she had got rid of Mrs. Biggs, she muttered to herself:

"A week from to-night! I will be here! My secret in the keeping of that drunken, garrulous woman! But it shall not be much longer. Her tongue will be silenced—a week from to-night."

Unconsciously her hand groped for the phial Bathurst had given her.

She was thus standing, when Bathurst, with a visage such as a demon might have worn, crept stealthily toward her and laid his hand heavily on her shoulder.

She uttered a wild scream and gave a wild spring, turning upon him a wild gaze of horror.

"You here?" she whispered.

"Yes, I am here!" said Bathurst, savagely, his eyes terrifying her cowardly soul to the verge of madness. "Liar! impostor! wretch! I have heard all!"

The girl clung to a tree for support. She could not speak.

"I know that it is you who are Rhedy Biggs, the child of that drunken hag!" cried Bathurst. "And Sinda is the real Lady Katharine Elliot—the daughter of Lord Tregaron. I am tempted to denounce you, you false creature! I am tempted to hasten to the castle and tell the whole story to Lord Tregaron and have you thrust out like a beggar!"

"I—I am your wife!"

"I know it, blight you! But you told me you were Lord Tregaron's daughter; you declared that you remembered your parents; you imposed upon me, you bad, you false wretch!" cried Bathurst, almost beside himself with rage. "I could kill you where you stand!"

"I am no worse than you," said the girl, sullenly.

"You pretended to be Lord Tregaron's heir. You said that you would inherit his title. You sought to entrap me; I followed your example. I thought that I might secure myself against discovery by marrying you. I thought to strengthen my position here; to guard against a possible rejection of me by Lord Tregaron. But you were just as bad as I. Do not call me evil names; except you apply them to yourself."

"If I had not been a fool, I might have suspected Tapes's revenge."

"But you did not—Lord Tregaron did not. No one suspects the truth but that old woman who has just gone. The secret can yet be covered up. If you have any courage, Wolsey Bathurst, you can assure my position and your own."

Bathurst's rage yielded to thoughtfulness. The prize for which he had striven—a goodly portion of the earl's wealth, with social recognition—was not yet lost.

We have said that he was unprincipled, bold and bad. He exhibited those characteristics now in the rapid turn his thoughts took. He comprehended all the evil ideas in the weak and cowardly soul beside him, and accepted them as his own.

"The old woman is a leaky vessel," he said, in a low tone, which he strove to render calm. "She drinks, and may betray you at any moment in her fits of intoxication. I will devise some plan to get rid of her."

"And the earl? He may suspect the truth. He is likely to do so. He regards me strangely at times. He prefers Sinda to me. He has said that I bear no resemblance to his lost wife. He has questioned me about my childhood, probed my supposed memory, and put me to my wit's end to answer him. If Sinda returns, and his suspicions increase, some look or tone of hers may induce him to believe that she is his and that I am the child of Mrs. Biggs. I am standing upon a volcano."

Wolsey Bathurst assented.

"I shall not feel safe until the earl is dead," whispered Maya. "Once he has gone, and this old woman silenced, I shall breathe freely."

"The earl must be got out of the way," said young Bathurst. "You have that phial. You have access to his rooms. Very well. Give him a potion to-night. The draught can be repeated at your pleasure. In a week he will be dead."

"The effect is to produce a paralysis," said Maya. "I will give him a potion to-night. I will be cautious. He must not die too suddenly, lest poison be suspected. Perhaps a fortnight should pass between the first dose and the last. He is still in the library. Let us hasten to the castle that I may visit his room before he enters it."

A little time was given to further planning, and to the elaboration of their wicked schemes, and then they returned to the castle.

Maya went upstairs and gained an entrance into the earl's rooms unseen.

Lord Tregaron's bedchamber was spacious and lofty, luxuriously furnished, and already lighted with wax candles in expectation of his immediate retirement for the night. The girl moved to the bedside, with hushed breath and cautious glances over her shoulders.

The valet had just retired; after depositing upon a table at the bedside a carafe of water. Quickly and stealthily the girl emptied from her phial of poison several drops of transparent liquid into the carafe, and silently stole from the room.

"He always drinks water before going to bed. I heard him say so once," she said to herself, creeping up to her own rooms. "He will drink to-night. Tomorrow he will be weak and complaining. Two further doses, and he will be dead—and I shall be safe!"

The light was burning dimly in Mrs. Elliot's room. The bed was in deep shadow. Rannelee was bending over it, her back to the door, apparently absorbed in ministering to the invalid, when the key grated in the lock, and Thomas Bathurst, in response to the Hindoo's summons, entered the chamber.

The two conspirators trembled. Yet Rannelee controlled herself sternly, knowing that her mistress's fate and her own depended upon her coolness at this juncture.

She turned her bronze visage towards Bathurst, and he detected in it a suppressed agitation, a keen and intense emotion.

"What is it?" he asked, quickly, hurrying to the bedside. "Is your mistress worse?"

Rannelee silently stepped aside, giving place to him. He bent over his victim, whose face was turned to the wall and in deep shadow. He could see that she was deadly pale, and he could not know that terror and hope were struggling within her, and that her soul was the scene of terrible emotions at that moment. He felt her pulse. It was quick and bounding.

"Good heavens, Agnes! he exclaimed. "Is this a relapse? Has the fever come on again? Why, I thought you were almost well. I had even determined to remove Rannelee to-morrow."

"Do not excite her, sir," said the Hindoo woman. "If she could sleep I am sure she would be better in the morning. But she is in no mood for sleep. I called you that you might see her and send for a dose of morphine."

"I will send for it immediately," exclaimed Bathurst, all alarm and excitement. "My man is in the passage outside. When did you first detect a change in Mrs. Elliot? And why was I not summoned before?"

"I summoned you as soon as I deemed necessary," replied Rannelee. "My missy has talked too much. A sleeping dose may restore her if administered immediately. A delay would be dangerous—"

Bathurst ran to the door. His valet was outside and he despatched him to a chemist's in all haste for the desired drug.

"Be as lively as you can," commanded the merchant. "Stop for nothing. Off with you! I'll secure the door."

The man went down the stairs three steps at a time.

Mr. Bathurst was about to hurry after him to fasten the outer door, when a low, wild moan came from the bed. The moan was followed by a scream, and the merchant flew to the bedside.

In an instant, seizing the advantage, the Hindoo woman slipped out at the open door into the passage and flew lightly down the stairs.

She had not reached the outer door of the dwelling, when Bathurst, having called her to the assistance of her mistress, and noted her flight, came bounding down the stairs in mad pursuit, yelling to her to stop.

But quick as he was, she was quicker. She pulled open the door and dashed out into the street. It was dark and silent. She crossed to the opposite side and crouched down in an arched doorway. Bathurst

came out upon his steps, looked wildly in every direction, listened, and finally re-entered the house, muttering:

"She's secured her own liberty anyhow. And she was in such a hurry about it that she never stopped to notice the street or the number of the house. She will never find her way back here, never! I presume her dread of that wine-vault has caused her to abandon Agnes after the devotion of so many years. Servants are all heartless alike, and greedy, and rapacious, and self-loving."

He secured the door and hurried back upstairs.

Mrs. Elliot had intended to rise and lock her door upon the inner side, but a little reflection had decided her not to do so.

The door could be broken in, if Bathurst so willed, and she was not able to bear any scene of great agitation.

Indeed, her excitement was already wrought up to such a pitch that she was feverish, weak, and ill, in great danger of relapse into the fever from whose clutches she had been rescued with such difficulty.

Therefore, when the merchant re-entered the room he found her lying on her pillow, her thin and ghastly cheeks becoming flushed with fever, her eyes wild, her speech rapid and incoherent.

Instead of appealing to her for information in regard to Rannelee, or telling her that the woman had escaped, he considered Mrs. Elliot innocent of all knowledge of the matter, and set to work to soothe her with the gentleness and tenderness of a brother.

"Don't fret, Agnes," he said. "Great heavens! why don't that fellow come? Are you so ill? Hang that treacherous Hindoo! To abandon a sick woman like this! She's positively heartless! Agnes, bear up! Agnes, hush, dear—"

"Don't come near me!" cried Mrs. Elliot. "Leave me alone! Go! go!"

She put up her white hand with the palm outward in a gesture commanding his departure. He essayed to argue with her, but yielded and went out, remaining in the lower hall, gloomy and angry, until the return of his servant with the medicine that had been ordered.

Then he re-entered the room, and gave Mrs. Elliot the dose of morphine. She took it meekly, and lay down upon her pillow, presently dropping into a slumber.

Bathurst went outside and locked the door, and waited and listened for some time. Then he joined his servant, informing him of Rannelee's escape, and sending him out to search for her.

Meanwhile the Hindoo woman had been prompt and energetic in her movements.

After waiting until Bathurst had re-entered the house and secured the door, Rannelee had crept across the street again, mounted the steps of Bathurst's dwelling, and studied the number painted above the door. Recrossing the street, she moved rapidly to the corner, where a friendly gas-lamp enlightened her to the name of the street.

With these two facts stored in her memory, she hurried into the next street, finding herself in a low and disreputable region, with men and women crowding the pavements; with thronged liquor saloons; street-booths lighted by cups of flaming grease; flambeaux and red lanterns; with all the sights and sounds peculiar to one of the lowest quarters in all London. Here women, half-dressed, drunk, noisy, and quarrelsome, sat on the house-steps, lounged, and held discourse with men even worse-looking and seeming lower in the scale of being than themselves.

Rannelee made her way through this street into others of similar character. At last she paused, inquiring her way to the South Western railway-station. The woman who she addressed received her question with jeering laughter and called a crowd around her in a moment.

The Hindoo's complexion, dress, turban, and entire appearance excited much mirth among these barbarians, and one man, who wore earrings in his ears, cried out:

"Come, nigger, you must treat. Give us a drink around, and we'll show you your way—that we will!"

The words were echoed on all sides. The crowd, eager for a sensation, delighted to torment the forlorn stranger.

She was hustled about, her turban pulled off, her gown examined; she was compelled to dance for the edification of her persecutors, and at last, half wild with anxiety in regard to her mistress, and being eager to hasten on her journey, she yielded to the demands that she should treat.

The money she had obtained in Calcutta, through her brother, and of which so large a sum remained to her, was for the most part encircled in a belt that encircled her person.

A small sum had been put in her pocket for travelling expenses. She drew out her little wallet and extracted from it a silver crown-piece.

It was seized, and a dozen grimy, lawless hands grabbed for her pocket-book.

Rannelee resisted, fighting like a tigress. The crowd hurled itself upon her. She screamed loudly for help, but her enemies mocked and jeered her. Blows were rained upon her; she swayed this way and that before the clenched fists of the brutal British mob, and finally, with a loud and piercing shriek, was borne down before them, and trampled upon, while their yells of triumph filled the air.

CHAPTER LVII.

THE encounter with Colonel Darke and Simon Biggs in Westminster-road, while she was in the very act of flight from the persecutions of both and of Mrs. Biggs, for that moment appalled Sinda. She believed that their glances had detected her; that she was about to be separated from Armand Elliot and old Fella; that she was to be dragged back to her imprisonment at Haigh Lodge.

She shrank back into the farthest corner of the cab, her eyes wild, her face deathly white, her breath quick and gasping. Armand Elliot pressed her hand reassuringly, but both he and Fella kept back in the shadow; not venturing to look out of the window.

And Colonel Darke and Simon Biggs continued their conversation under the glare of the gaslights of the Varieties, totally unconscious that Sinda had escaped from her confinement, and that she was at that very moment not ten feet distant from them.

The blockade of cabs and omnibusses, although seemingly interminable, was really of brief duration. The cab in which Sinda was riding presently moved on, but the girl did not breathe freely, nor did the terror lift from her heart, until they had crossed Westminster Bridge, and were well on their way to Kensington.

She had recovered her self-possession, but was still very white and trembling, when the vehicle finally drew up before a quiet house in a row of similar houses in a very quiet street, not far from Kensington Gardens.

Armand Elliot alighted and rung the brass knocker loudly. A servant gave him admittance into the dwelling. He entered, remained within a few moments, and then came forth, hurrying to the cab.

The look of relief upon his countenance assured Sinda that he had found shelter for her under the roof of his former housekeeper. She descended to the pavement and entered the house with him, followed by Fella.

They were met in the narrow passage-way by the lodging-house keeper, a large and portly woman, with a kindly, good-natured face, just now beaming with sympathy, Elliot having told her enough of Sinda's history to enlist her devotion to the young girl, and to induce her to keep Sinda's presence in her house as nearly secret as possible.

"I have fortunately my best rooms vacant, miss," said Mrs. Galt. "They were put in order to-day for a lodger who didn't come. Let me show you upstairs, and you can make yourselves comfortable, and I'll send up a hot supper to you as soon as it can be prepared."

Sinda looked at her lover with grateful eyes, and held out her hand to him.

"Shall I say good-night now?" she asked.

"Not just yet. I am going up to see you installed in your new quarters," he answered. "And then I shall return to my lodgings in Camberwell. The cab will wait for me."

Mrs. Galt led the way upstairs to her first floor front. An order had been hastily given during Elliot's return to the cab, and a fire that had been laid hours before had been lighted, and a couple of wax candles were burning in the snug and pleasant little drawing-room. The curtains had been drawn, and a couch was placed near the hearth. It seemed a little haven of refuge to Sinda, and her brightening look did not escape Elliot's observation.

"Do you think that you can be content here a few days, Sinda?" he asked, while Mrs. Galt exhibited the adjoining bedchamber to Fella.

"A few days, Armand? Are we not to go on in the morning to Cornwall?"

"It seems to me that it would be wiser not to go on immediately. Mrs. Biggs and her son will naturally suppose that you have fled to Belle Isle, and will hasten to Cornwall by the first train. Let them take the journey in vain, and when they shall turn their attention to some other direction we will go there."

"As you think best, Armand. I am so tired and weak that I could rest here for some days contentedly."

"You will find Mrs. Galt attentive and trustworthy. I shall procure lodgings nearer you to-morrow, and shall come every day to see you. And now, my brave little darling, good night!"

Mrs. Galt and Falla were in the inner room. He drew Sinda to him with passionate tenderness, embracing and kissing her. Then he gently released her, and moved toward the door as the woman reappeared.

He made his adieux general, and took his leave, departing in the cab. He proceeded to Regent Street, where he dismissed the vehicle, sauntered some distance, and found another cab in which he returned to his lodgings in Camberwell.

Here he spent the night, as Mrs. Biggs subsequently ascertained. He awakened early, was served with breakfast; sent out for a cab; and had scarcely left the house with his scanty luggage when Mrs. Biggs, in great excitement, made her appearance, as he had foreseen that she would do.

He returned to Kensington and found lodgings, not far from the house occupied by Mrs. Galt. And at a later hour he called upon Sinda, and was shown up to her little parlour.

The girl had lost something of the nervousness of the preceding evening.

She welcomed him with a shy blush and a sudden glow in her sweet, dusky eyes that emboldened him to unfold his special errand without much delay. Unheeding the presence of old Falla, he urged her to become his wife, and the Hindoo woman joined her pleadings to his. But Sinda was resolute still in her refusal.

"Do not urge, Armand," she said, sorrowfully. "You are an earl's presumptive heir, and I am only what I am. How could you bear to have Mrs. Biggs for a mother-in-law? How could you bear to have Simon Biggs claiming you as a relative?"

"I can bear their claims or their presence as well as you can!" declared Elliot. But it is not necessary that they should trouble us. I will take you to the Continent: we will travel—they will not follow us."

"You would become an exile for my sake? It must not be, Armand. Do not urge me against my convictions of right."

"Sinda, you do not harbour still those absurd ideas of duty towards Mrs. Biggs?" demanded Elliot, anxiously. "You do not think it possible that you can ever return to her?"

"No, I do not," answered Sinda, frankly, yet with a pain as that touched him. "Notwithstanding the fact that she is my mother, and that my reason is convinced of the relationship, my heart rejects her. I detest her—I loathe her! She has no love for me. She has oppressed me, even struck me! She is determined that I shall marry her son's friend, Colonel Darke! Return to her? Oh, no, I cannot. I will toil for my daily bread, I will starve even, but I will not return to her!"

"Then why will you not be my wife? My darling, why will you let some absurd notion about Mrs. Biggs and her son stand between us? Let me be your protector and shield you from your enemies. If you go to Belle Isle as companion to Maya, Mrs. Biggs will take you away."

The girl shivered. "I have read so much about the English ideas of caste," she answered, "and they seem to me scarcely less hard than those of India. If you marry the daughter of Mrs. Biggs, the society you enter will reject your wife. You will be condemned, your friends will be angered."

"I have no friends for whose opinion I would sacrifice my happiness," said Elliot, smiling. "I have but one special friend, after you, whose opinion I greatly value, and he, Lord Tregaron, would approve our marriage!"

Sinda lifted her head quickly.

"Do you think so, Armand?"

"I know it."

The shy blush crept back into the pale, cream-tinted face. The warm glow came back to the dusky eyes.

"Lord Tregaron seems to me one of the grandest, noblest, wisest, men in all the wide world," she said. "And if he consents, I—"

"Will consent also," said our hero. "Let it be as you wish. I will take you to Belle Isle a few days hence, when you shall have fully recovered your strength, and Mrs. Biggs shall have turned her attention to some other direction than Cornwall. And we can be married by special license as well in the little Tregaron church as here. It is settled, then."

Old Falla at this point interpolated her expressions of satisfaction and delight.

The week passed, and still Sinda lingered in her new quarters, loth to leave it, fearing lest Mrs. Biggs should be lying somewhere in wait to pounce upon her. Mrs. Galt was very attentive and kind to her new lodger, and Sinda regained her strength rapidly. Armand Elliot visited her daily. At the end of the week he proposed that on the morrow they should start for Cornwall, and Sinda assented.

The next day they were on their way to Belle Isle.

This was the day upon the evening of which Maya had appointed a meeting with Mrs. Biggs in Tregaron Park.

Mrs. Biggs had spent the week in Lostwithiel, watching the trains in the expectation of Sinda's arrival. Her son and Colonel Darke were searching elsewhere with unremitting zeal for the young fugitive, and believing that the young girl must present herself at Belle Isle sooner or later, or that Elliot would send thither some report of his movements, they had commanded the old woman to remain at Lostwithiel until further orders.

It happened that she was not at the station upon this particular evening, thus for the first time missing the London train since her arrival.

The cause of her absence was this. She had agreed to meet Maya at a later hour, and had set to work to fortify herself for the impending interview with a jug of beer. She was holding a private orgy in her own room at the inn when the train steamed into the station, and not until an hour thereafter was she sober enough to remember the omitted duty, or to prepare for her visit to Belle Isle.

And by this time Sinda, Armand Elliot and old Falla were entering the stately, shaded avenue of Belle Isle, and swiftly approaching the gray old castle.

The long twilight was deepening into night when the fly drew up in the carriage-porch. Lights streamed from the windows of the drawing-room, and from several additional windows down the long facade, and yet there was an air of gloom about the place that struck the new-comers strangely.

Elliot alighted and helped out Sinda and Falla. He discharged the fly, and mounted the steps with Sinda upon his arm, just as the great door swung open, and the hall-porter, in livery and with a sorrowful visage, presented himself upon the threshold.

He greeted the young couple with a very low bow, and made way for them.

"Is anything the matter?" asked Elliot. "Is any one ill?"

The butler came down the marble-paved hall, with a countenance yet more gloomy than that of the porter. He bowed low and flung open the door of the drawing-room.

"I'm glad you've come, sir," he said, with a look of relief. "We've telegraphed three times this week, sir, and got no answer, and feared you'd gone abroad."

"What is the matter?"

"It's my lord, sir," said the butler, solemnly. "He had a paralytic stroke this night a week ago."

Elliot was shocked. His amazement was equalled only by his grief.

He conducted Sinda into the great, yellow drawing-room, which was warmed and lighted, but untenanted, and placed her in a chair. Then he turned to the butler who had followed them, and asked for particulars of the sad event.

"My lord, sir, went to bed in his usual health upon the night of his seizure," said the butler. "In the morning his valet found him insensible. We sent to Lostwithiel for a physician; we telegraphed to London for Sir Henry Holt, and a consultation was held, and they declared that my lord had had a stroke of paralysis."

"Is he better? Will he recover?"

"He is better, sir, and sits up in his own chamber. He will recover if he improves as he has been doing, but there is a great danger of another stroke, and that would very likely be fatal. We telegraphed to you immediately, as my lord desired. He asks for you, sir, every hour."

"Let him be notified of my arrival. Stay. Let me understand more of this sad occurrence. Do you know the cause of his seizure?"

The butler glanced at Sinda, as if hesitating to speak before her. She was regarding him with great burning eyes and eager expression, her soul in her face.

"If you please, sir," he answered, "the attack was probably the result of a visit his lordship received at an earlier hour of that same night. A Mrs. Biggs—"

Sinda clasped her hands together.

"Yes," said Elliot. "We know her probable errand. But surely her visit could not excite Lord Tregaron."

"She was very violent, sir, a threatening and a raging, and his lordship was greatly excited, and she went away. But in the morning he was found in a state of partial paralysis. Lady Katharine is overcome with grief. She insists on nursing his lordship; but he, as sick people often do, has taken a dislike to his nearest kin, and won't have her nurse him. And my lord keeps Mr. Bathurst out of his room most of the time. He dislikes him too."

"Let him know that I am come," said Elliot. "But first request Mrs. Connors to come to the drawing-room."

The butler bowed and withdrew. Elliot took Sinda's hand in his, comforting her with his warm, firm pressure.

"If Lord Tregaron should die!" murmured the girl. "Oh, Armand, he is so good, so noble, and I have learned to love him so!"

"We must hope for the best, dear. He may recover. People do recover from paralysis every day. Here comes Mrs. Connors."

The housekeeper entered the room. Sinda arose and held out her hand. Mrs. Connors welcomed her warmly. She had grown to love the little ex-Begum very tenderly during Sinda's stay at Belle Isle.

"I wish to place Miss Sinda in your care, Mrs. Connors," said Elliot. "If you will kindly look after her comfort in this trying time I shall be grateful to you."

"Miss Sinda's rooms are ready," said the housekeeper. "My lord ordered them to be kept in readiness for her return. Shall I show you upstairs at once, Miss Sinda, before informing Lady Katharine of your arrival? She is dressing for dinner—"

"I should prefer to go to my room," said Sinda. "I am very tired and dusty."

Mrs. Connors led the way, and Sinda and her servant followed her.

They had scarcely left the drawing-room when the butler returned, saying that Lord Tregaron desired to see Mr. Elliot as soon as he should be sufficiently rested and refreshed from his journey.

The butler showed Elliot to his room. The young man made a hasty toilet and proceeded to the earl's room. His knock was answered by the valet who gave him admittance.

Lord Tregaron was seated by the fire, in an easy-chair, wrapped in a dressing-gown. He turned his face toward the door as Elliot entered, and the young man was shocked at the change his illness had wrought in him. He was ghastly pale, thin, and hollow-cheeked, haggard and aged by suffering, and his eyes were preternaturally large, and set in great, dark rims that gave a startling effect to his countenance.

He held out his hand silently. Elliot took it, pressed it, and sat down beside him with a genuine grief and sympathy expressed in every feature.

"I did not know that you had been ill until my arrival," said the young man. "I need not tell you how shocked and sorry I am at your illness, my lord. But you are able to sit up. You will soon be well."

"Let us hope so, Armand," replied the earl. "And yet why should I desire to live? Death would be a boon to me, for it would unite me to my Agnes, my sainted wife, whom I lost so long ago. I have been thinking much of her lately—more than usual, I mean. Perhaps I am about to rejoice her."

He sighed heavily, but a transient gleam of brightness shot across his eyes.

"Is Sinda with you?" asked the earl, before Elliot could devise a response to his previous words.

"She is—"

"And you are married?"

"No, my lord. Sinda would not marry me without your consent and approval. She fancies that the character of Mrs. Biggs should be a barrier between herself and me. But she will ask your advice, and if you approve the marriage she will consent. She thinks you grand and wise, and she loves you—"

The earl's lips quivered.

"I love her, Armand," he said. "I love her as if she were my own child. Poor girl! She has known bitter suffering, has she not? We must rescue her from that horrible woman. You love her. What do you care for her relatives since she is so noble, so lovely, so refined? Marry her, Armand, and take her abroad for a few years. Mrs. Biggs is at Lostwithiel. She will follow Sinda here to-night or to-morrow. Let the marriage take place as soon as possible."

He leaned back in his chair, breathless and ghastly.

"Pray be calm, my lord," said Elliot, in alarm, "this excitement is bad for you."

The earl was silent for a few moments, and then said quietly:

"Have you seen Maya?"

Elliot noticed that Lord Tregaron did not call the girl Katharine.

"Not yet," he answered, gently.

"I am greatly disappointed in her. I can own that much to you, Armand. What will become of her

if I am taken from her? Who will guide her wifely feet? I fancy that she and Bathurst have an attachment for each other, but when I asked her yesterday she indignantly denied it. Maya seems to have lost all affection for Sinda. Shield Sinda from her attacks. Armand. It may be that Maya will take the part of Mrs. Biggs, if that woman should make her appearance to-night! But whatever happens, do not let Sinda go!"

They talked further, and then Elliot, fearing that Lord Tregaron would be injured by over excitement, arose to leave the room.

"Come in again after dinner," said the earl, "and bring Sinda with you! I think I shall make Sinda my nurse if she is willing. I am eager for the sound of her light step, Armand, and for the sight of her sweet face. Ah, if Heaven had but given her to me for my daughter!"

(To be continued.)

FORTUNE TELLING.

It is somewhat surprising the tenacity with which many of us cling to old traditions and superstitions. But a few days since a man obtained a sum of money for attempting to charm away disease. But we need not go into the provinces among the rural population to look for disciples and believers in the "Black Art." Recently an old woman was sentenced at the Clerkenwell Police-court to six weeks' imprisonment for pretended fortune-telling by cards, it being stated that the prisoner was much patronised by the young women of the neighbourhood. Many, perhaps, upon reading the case would exclaim, "Ah, some silly, ignorant servant girls;" but it is not so.

That this superstition exists among the better educated is easy of proof, and can clearly be traced to the present style of literature—much affected by our modern young lady, and which saps and undermines all natural, healthy feelings, and creates a morbid appetite for the wonderful that must be satisfied at any cost, even by applying to an old woman who exercises her calling in the most barfaced manner, and however reprehensible her conduct may be, it is, to our thinking, less open to blame than that of the silly dupes who patronise her.

THE coaching renaissance has, we regret to say, lost one of its most energetic supporters in Mr. Eden, the proprietor and popular "whip" of the well known High Wycombe drag. This news will, we feel assured, be received with unaffected regret throughout the coaching world, and more particularly on the Wycombe-road. It will be a long time before so urbane and skilful a driver sits behind the team which used to whirl the "yellow coach" through Uxbridge and Beaconsfield to the very minute.

MR. BOUTICAULT asserts that the whole stock of a theatre might be rendered fire-proof, that is with a solution of tungstate of soda and silicate of soda, for £20, and he urges that all lessees of theatres should be required to adopt this precaution under pain of forfeiting their licences.

BERTHILDA'S OFFER.

MR. FLINT had the reputation of being as hard as his name. Certainly he was a crusty sort of old gentleman, with a disagreeable habit of telling what he considered the plain truth to every one. As every one did not at once bow low and say: "Mr. Flint, you are perfectly right," this habit of frankness had brought him into a good many quarrels with his friends and relatives, so that at last the only one of his own blood with whom he was on speaking terms was his orphan niece, Berthilda, who kept house for him; to whom he was unusually kind, and who believed him to be a modern Solomon.

She had never once contradicted him. When he told her that the Flints were generally good-looking, but that she took after her mother's family, who were all as plain as pike-staffs, she answered: "Yes, Uncle, but that is not my fault, you know."

When he said that she needn't mind about not being good-looking, because, after all, she was a nice little thing and would be more apt to be left to keep house for him for ever, she appeared to be comforted.

She was mild and meek, and her vanity had been quite taken out of her by her uncle's frankness.

She was, really, by no means so very plain; but she accepted Mr. Flint's opinion without a murmur. It was all genuine. She was one of those little

women who naturally bow down before the male head of their family and worship him. She had not even reflected that he might leave her his money, or some portion of it. It was too dreadful to think of Uncle Flint's ever dying at all.

As for marrying, it did not enter Berthilda's mind. She had written herself down a spinster, as soon as she had heard Uncle Flint's opinion on the subject, which was oracularly given when she was about sixteen years of age; but now that she was very nearly thirty she was astonished by the appearance of a lover in the shape of a stout farmer of forty, a widower without children, and owner of as fine a piece of property as could be found in the country.

It was a case of love at first sight on his part, and Berthilda finding herself made love to, and being quite unused to the situation, felt that it was her duty to refuse him, since to marry would be to contradict Uncle Flint's distinct assertion that she was born to be an old maid; and yet yielded to the advances of Mr. Hoskins, so far as to allow herself to be seen home from "meeting," kissed at the gate, and occasionally encircled by a very large arm, which, after a squeeze or two, she always put away with a shocked little squeal.

Finally Mr. Hoskins offered himself, and Berthilda, having confessed to a partiality for him, ended by asserting that Uncle Flint must decide the matter, and that she dare not mention the subject to him.

"Well, then I will," said Mr. Hoskins. "I ain't afraid of no man, and if your uncle has anything agin me, he can out with it and prove it. I'll write and ask him, since you are so particler, Berthilda; though bein' of age I can't see why he has anything to say about it."

To which Berthilda, sobbing, replied that her uncle's word was her law, and was kissed at the gate as usual, this conversation having taken place on a Sunday evening on the way from church.

On Monday morning old Mr. Flint, going, after breakfast, into the little room which he called his office, and where he transacted his business as notary public, found lying on his desk two letters already left for him that morning, and opening them found that each asked him for something.

One was from a neighbour named Perkins, who desired to borrow a horse of him. The other from Farmer Hoskins, asking for his niece Berthilda's hand.

Mr. Flint was not in the habit of lingering long over any decision. He regarded the fact that Berthilda had had an offer as a sort of miracle not likely to occur again, and he had an idea that women always like to be married.

Hoskins was well to do and respectable. She should have him, if she choose. She had been a good girl to him, and he really felt an affection for her.

As for Perkins, he should not have his horse. He had overworked the one he had borrowed of him last harvest-time, and the poor brute died in consequence. Lend Perkins his gray mare indeed! He would give him a piece of his mind for his impudence. And he would settle that business before he attended to Berthilda's offer.

So he drew his blotter toward him, seized pen and ink, and indited this peppery epistle:

"SIR,—I don't wonder you wrote, and hadn't the face to come and ask me for what you wanted, like a man. Let you have her indeed! When every one knows you killed the other one with over-work, and only sent her home to be buried. A pretty idea that, indeed! She was just a rack of bones when you got through her, and, I judge, half starved as well as worked to death. You'll promise to take good care of her, no doubt. You may if you get her; but you'll only do that by stealing her, and as I suppose you're quite capable of that, I shall see to my locks."

This finished, he wrote more briefly to Mr. Hoskins:

"DEAR SIR,—I can't see anything in the way of your having what you want. You can come over if you like and talk it over."

Having done these, he put each into an envelope and sent them off.

Poor Berthilda scarcely dared to raise her eyes to her uncle's face that day; but his manner to her was unusually kind, and she had allowed herself to hope much from it, when, as she sat at her knitting in the evening, Peggy, the sole domestic, besetted mysteriously to her from the door; and having thus beguiled her into the hall, informed her that Mr. Hoskins wanted to see her at the gate.

To the gate Berthilda went in a state of nervous agitation which made the blue ribbon bow in her hair quiver like a humming-bird, and there she found Mr.

Hoskins so red in the face with rage that the colour was perceptible by the moonlight.

And his greeting was this:

"Berthilda, if old Flint was anybody's uncle but yours, I'd go in and pummel the breath out of him. I've a minter to do it now."

"Oh, dear!" sobbed Berthilda, "what is the matter?"

"He's writ me a letter that was jest chock full of insults from fast to last," said Mr. Hoskins. "Said I writ 'cause I was afeard to ask him for you; said every one knew that I killed Abigail Araminty with overwork, and starved her to death, and sent her over to her ma's to be buried. Now Abigail Araminty died of the consumption that was in her family, and I spent lots in doctor's stuff; and if she was buried from her ma's, that was the old lady's wish. And Araminty she would go there to die. And I did all mortal man could, and I hired help, and I wasn't no-wise hard on Abigail Araminty; and your uncle, he's a liar, and if he'll come out here I'll wring his neck. I've as much as I kin do to keep from saying words a man hadn't orter say after he's jined church. I never was so mad in my life. I'm bursting with rage; and he says I'm a thief, and he's no doubt I'll steal you if I can; and so I will. It's jest this, Berthilda—you come along with me now, and get Parson Speer to marry us, or there's an end of it. It's all up between us. You choose betwixt old Flint and me, and ef you choose him, why I ain't under no obligations to you no longer, and I'll make a jelly of him in three shakes of a sheep's tail."

At these words Berthilda trembled more than ever. "The fountains that were in her head overflowed and ran out of her eyes adown her cheeks."

"Oh, oh, oh!" she sobbed, "was ever a poor woman in such trouble? Oh, oh!"

"Choose!" cried Hoskins; "and darned if I ain't so mad I don't keer much which way you choose. I'd rather like to be at lib'ry to go for old Flint and smash him—by jingo, I had!"

"Why don't I die?" sobbed Berthilda. "But, oh, Silas, I can't leave Uncle Flint like that. It wouldn't be decent."

"Then here goes," said Silas Hoskins, taking off his cuffs.

At this moment a long, lath-like figure strode past them and began to hammer at the door.

The servant opened it, and Peter Perkins' voice inquired for Mr. Flint.

Mr. Flint at once appeared in the entry.

"Well, what do you want here?" was his salutation.

"Wall, Mr. Flint," said Peter Perkins, "seem you was so 'bliged and neighbourly about that gray mare, I kinder reckoned I'd jost step in and lend her over to-night. You see I git in my hay to-morrow, and there's a rain a comin' up along the end of the week, or I aint no prophet."

"So you do mean to steal her?" said old Flint.

"I've seen impudence before, but this caps all."

"Kinder guess you've forgot who I am?" said Peter Perkins. "Don't you remember a writtin' to me this morning? I'm Mr. Perkins, Mr. Flint."

"I know you well enough," said Flint. "D'ye think I'm in my dotage? You're the man that killed my brown horse last summer, and asked for my gray mare to do the same by this. And I told you what I thought of you in my note. You must have been drinking, Mr. Perkins! You must be tipsy, sir, to ask me for my gray mare after what I wrote you this morning!"

"I drinking? I never touch anything but tea. I'm a Son of Temperance, sir!" shouted Mr. Perkins, so that his voice reached the ears of the unhappy couple at the gate. "I tipsy!"

"Then if you're sober you can't read!" said Mr. Flint.

"You wrote me a note telling me to come over, and saying there was nothing in the way of my having the gray mare," said Mr. Perkins.

"That's untrue, sir!" said Mr. Flint.

"You're telling falsehoods, sir!" said Mr. Perkins.

"Hanged if I'll stand it!"

And now Miss Berthilda saw her uncle menaced by a bony fist, and flew up the path, with Hoskins after her.

"You abominable rascal!" cried Mr. Flint.

"Tells me I'm tipsy and a liar, sir," cried Perkins to Hoskins. "Asked him neighbour-like to lend me his gray mare, and he wrote he would, and now calls me all the names he can lay his tongue to."

"I don't doubt it, sir!" said Mr. Hoskins. "He's insulted me, sir. Told me I worked my poor, late Abigail Araminty to death, and starved her, and was a thief and afeard of him. Writ that to me, sir! Hang him!"

"That's false!" said old Flint.

"Now, I am an idiot, am I?" cried Hoskins.

"You are both insane!" said Flint.

"You never writ that to me?" cried Hoskins.

"No doubt it's true, but I didn't," cried Flint.
 "He is crazy," said Hoskins.
 "Mad as a March hare," said Perkins.
 "You are a couple of lunatics. I'll be protected against you. Here! help! Some one go for the constable!"

"A lunatic!" said Mr. Perkins. "Why, there's the letter you writ me. If you were a younger man I'd not stop to argue; but you're old enough to be my father."

"That's another falsehood," said Flint. "You're fifty years old."

"Well, that's the letter you writ me, anyway," said Perkins, holding out a crumpled sheet of paper. Flint took it in his hand, glanced at it, and said: "It isn't," but his face altered.

"Contradicts anything," said Perkins.

"I suppose you'll deny you wrote me that?" said Hoskins, offering another letter to the old man.

Again Mr. Flint glanced at the page.

"Yes, I do," he said.

But this time he grinned.

"Perhaps a secret enemy," murmured Berthilda.

Uncle Flint looked at her; her nose was red with weeping.

"You're a good girl, Berthilda, if you are an ugly one," said Uncle Flint. "For your sake I'll explain matters. I wrote both these letters, but I sent them to the wrong man. That's yours, Hoskins. Perkins, that's yours; and I meant every word of it."

And he handed the letters to their proper owners. "I'll see if this ain't a case of libel," said Perkins, as he walked off.

But Hoskins advanced and held out his large hand.

"Let bygones be bygones," he said. "May I have Berthilda, Mr. Flint?"

"You can ask her," said Flint.

And though Berthilda only said, "Oh, dear," and cried again, Hoskins was contented, and the wedding came off in due time.

M. K. D.

OUR STUDY.

LITTLE folks have their cares, particularly if they are ambitious to learn. This is the way too many little folks live; they rise weary and languid in the morning; fret about unprepared lessons—often utterly beyond their comprehension—eat a hasty, and therefore unwholesome breakfast, and then hasten to school to breathe impure air, and to sit with cruel propriety on hard stools for several hours each day; and to study, or try to do so, amid the confusion unavoidable in the best regulated schools. They go home tired and irritable, to practise their music and study their next day's lessons, and to worry the family with their anxieties; and they go to bed to dream of the censure and discipline of a teacher who is herself, perhaps, crowded beyond the power of woman's endurance. What our children need is plenty of play, careless sleep, and rest in waking hours, recreation and a very little study. When we see veins grow dark in little temples and a pallor come over lips once red, let us, before sending for the doctor, lift the weight from heart, brain and lungs; and let our children be real children, even though it be at the risk of going a little behind others of their years in arithmetic and geography.

"THE CAPTAIN'S YOUNGEST."

I've seen many a young gentleman in my day, through being a military man, and living among what you might call "swells;" but I never saw a young gentleman as could hold a candle to my young master, Lionel, him that was called "The Captain's Youngest." No, not as were fit to black his boots, for the matter of that. And I knew him, too, from the time he were a young gentleman in long clothes, being carried about in his ayah's arms; and many's the time, too, that I have carried him myself, and been proud to do it.

You see, I knew his father, Captain Dalgetty, of the 57th, in his best days, when he first came out to India, with his regiment; a fine, dashing young fellow, as was a favourite with everybody. After a while he married, and married a belle; and he and his wife were as pretty a couple as you need see. By-and-bye, Miss Rose was born, and then other children; and last of all, when Miss Rose was about eight years old, my own young master.

When the family began to grow up, the regiment was ordered back to England; and I came back with them, you see. The captain was not rich, and as the family expenses got bigger, year by year, money got scarcer with him, and they couldn't live as they did before; and so, somehow, I think it was because I liked the children, and especially my young master, I fell into a way of being half valet, half waiter, half man-of-all-work for the Captain and his.

This wasn't all. The Captain's fine way—for he was handsome still, and a gentleman born, and no mistake—brought him fine friends; and his fine friends brought him debt, because he was obliged to keep up with them. Everything was badly managed, because Mrs. Dalgetty, who'd been a belle, as I said, and good for nothing, as belles never are, but to dress fine and look pretty; because Mrs. Dalgetty, as I said, knew nothing about managing; so the servants ran wild, and were nothing but trouble and expense, and there were nothing but struggling to keep up, and threatening to break down, from day to day.

"The Captain is worse than ever," Mrs. Dalgetty would say, sometimes, when things looked bad, and she had a crying fit on. "And Rose is so expensive, and the other girls are growing up. I wish Lionel was older. He is the only one who seems to feel for me at all."

The real truth were—as Lionel were that sweet-natured—he felt for them all; and I must say, as they couldn't help being so fond of him, in their way, as he was of them in his.

"Rabbett," says he to me once, when they were all going out—he was about nine years old then, or thereabout—"Rabbett, if you would like to see Rose before she goes, just stand in the passage, when I go into the drawing-room with her shawl and handkerchief. She has just sent for her mother."

Now, my young master loved his mother dearly, but he loved Rose even better; he was allers talking to me of her beauty.

So I says, "I would like to see her." And he runs upstairs, quite pleased, and is down agsin in a minute.

"I'll leave the door open," he says. And in he goes, with the shawl over his arm, and does leave it open, quite wide enough for me to see through.

Miss Rose was standing by the fire, and beautiful she looked, in her grand evening dress, and so like what her mother had been, that it gave me quite a start. There was a gentleman at her side, a laughing and talking to her, and when Master Lionel goes in, this party turns towards the door, to look at him, and I sees his face, and I gives a start again, for it were Captain Basil Roscoe.

Now I knew sum'at of Captain Basil Roscoe, you see, and that's what made me give a start. If ever there was a villain, and he to be called a gentleman, Captain Basil Roscoe were one. I know things of him that he little guessed; we servants get to hear many queer things. I felt, when I sees him, as if I saw a snake.

"Here comes the shawl," says Captain Basil, and he held out his hand, as if he meant to put it on for himself, but Miss Rose laughs and steps him.

"No," says she; "Lionel wouldn't like that. Would you, Lionel? He always puts my shawl on for me."

The Captain drew back a bit, and gave the boy a sharp glance, but Miss Rose did not see it, for she was bending down to have the shawl put over her white shoulders, and Master Lionel was a folding it round her, as pleased as could be, laughing, too, boy-like, but, for all that, doing it as deft and graceful as if he'd been born to it.

And then, when it was done, Miss Rose put her little hands on the shoulders of his jacket, and kissed him half-a-dozen times, so coaxing, and merry, and happy, that I could not bear to think the time would come, when life would look harder to her than it did just then—going out to a grand ball in a pretty dress, and with her lover by her side.

Unless it is true, that the Evil One shrinks from and hates them as has no sins of their own, I should like to know why it was that Basil Roscoe were so ready, in taking a dislike to a innocent-faced boy, as never harmed or differed with him; for nothing is more certain than that from the first he did take a dislike to Master Lionel.

It struck me, once or twice, as he not only couldn't bear the sight of him, but that if he had had the chance he would not have been sorry to do him a harm. His sneering manner showed it, and his ill-

looking, handsome face showed it, apart from a hundred other bits of things. Master Lionel himself found it out soon enough.

"Rabbett," says he, private and confidential, "he doesn't like me, and I don't like him, and I wish he wasn't so fond of Rose. I never did him any harm, you know, Rabbett."

Natural enough, his spirit is hurt about it, and he takes it a bit hard. But he never says much about it, until one night he comes to me, and I sees he is wonderful quiet, and after a while I make bold to ask what ails him. And the minute I asks him, I sees, by the look in his eyes, that what ails him is something uncommon.

"It's something about Rose," he says, "and it's something about Capt. Roscoe."

A slight huskiness comes in my throat, as makes it necessary for me to clear it.

"Oh!" I says. "Indeed, sir?"

"Yes," he answers. "As I was coming here, I passed him, standing at the corner of the street, with a gentleman, and they were both talking aloud, Rabbett, and laughing. And they were talking about Rose."

Knowing the man so well, and having heard so much of his villany, my blood fairly boiled at the thought of what he might have been saying; but I made up my mind to speak quietly.

"Did you hear what they said, sir?" I asked.

"Are you sure it was her they were speaking of?"

"Yes," says he, "sure, for I heard the gentleman say, 'What? Pretty Rose Dalgetty?' And then Roscoe answered, 'Even she might get tiresome.' And they both laughed. Rabbett"—and he turned his troubled, questioning boy's face to me, as if he was just awaking to some sort of wildered fear and wanted help—"what did he mean by saying she might get tiresome? And what made them laugh as they did? They were laughing at her—my sister Rose."

"No gentleman would have done it, sir," I answered, not knowing what else to say.

"I know that," he says. "But what did they mean? You are older than me, Rabbett, and perhaps you can understand more than that it was not what a gentleman would have done."

But of course I could not tell him that. If it meant nothing worse, it at least did mean as Miss Rose's lover had so little respect for her, that he could bandy her name among his companions with something like a sneer; so I tried my best to lead him away from the subject.

If he'd been an ordinary young gentleman, and he so very young yet, I might have managed it; but being the little fellow he was, the suspicion that his sister had been somehow slighted stuck to him, and settled itself deep in his mind, and made him thoughtful beyond his years.

And this was far from being the end of it. Little by little I began to hear a whisper here and there, even among the men, about what people said of Capt. Roscoe being so friendly with the Dalgettys, and parti'lar with Miss Rose. There was not one of them but said that it would do the pretty young creature no good, if it did her no harm, to be so ready to let him be attentive.

He had been such an open rascal in his time, and his character was so well known, that no careful mother would have let her innocent daughter be seen with him, and he was only tolerated in his own set, and among those who were as bad as himself.

But Miss Dalgetty was too thoughtful and indifferent to see the wrong in him, or to be troubled by what she heard, and the Captain was rarely at home; so Miss Rose was left to herself, and of course did as any other innocent girl would have done, fell in love with a handsome face, and believed in it.

But at last so much was said by outsiders, that something came to the Captain's ears, as must have roused him, for one evening he comes up to the house in a towering rage, and shuts himself up with Miss Rose and her mother in the parlour, and has a tremendous row, and makes them both cry, and ends up by forbidding them to speak to Roscoe again.

But though Mrs. Dalgetty gave in, as she always did when the Captain gave his orders, of course Miss Rose would not believe anything against her lover. Things had gone so far by that time that she would have stood out for him against the whole world; and as she dared not openly disobey her father, she fretted until she lost her pretty colour and bright spirits, and went about the house looking ill and wretched.

But the matter was not put an end to, as you may



[BETWEEN LOVER AND BROTHER.]

Imagine. Once or twice, in going from the house to the barracks, I found Capt. Basil Roscoe loitering about not far from the street's end, and more than once I could have sworn that I passed him at dusk with a familiar little figure clinging to his arm.

And one night Miss Rose calls her brother to her, as he was going out on an errand, and, as she bends over him in the door-way, slips a note in his hand, crying pitifully:

"You will take that for me, won't you, dear?" she says. "He is waiting in the Square for it, and he does want it so—so much." And she kisses him, and gives a little sob and runs up stairs.

I don't think it could have been more than three minutes after that when he comes to me, all pale and breathless with running, and lays that there note on the table.

"She wants me to take it to him, Rabbett," he says, "and she was crying when she asked me, and—What must we do?"

It is not to be expected, as we two hadn't talked things over, being the friends we were. We had talked them over, and how it had come about I don't know, but the time had come when it were as plain as day to me that the danger the poor girl were in, was not hid from the boy's eyes, little as he knew of the world and its wickedness. I got up and took the note from the table, making a resolution all of a sudden.

"If you'll stay here, sir," I said, "I'll take it myself." And take it I did, and found the rascal waiting, as Miss Rose had said he would be. He gave a black enough scowl when he saw it were me, and it certainly didn't die out when I spoke to him.

"Sir," says I, "I've come here on a poor errand, and I've come unwilling enough. He knows. I've got a note in my hand here—a pitiful little letter from a trusting, innocent girl, to a man who, if he does not mean her harm, surely cannot mean her good, or he would not be leading her to meet him, and write to him in underhand ways. And I've been making up my mind, as I came along, to make an appeal to that man, as surely he'll listen to if he has a man's heart in his breast. She is scarcely more than a child, sir, and she knows nothing of the world. Leave her alone, and she may marry a good man, and be a happy woman; go on as you've begun, and it will be death, and ruin, and heartbreak, to her, and her wrongs will lie at your door."

He stands there and looks at me, and by the light of the lamp we was standing under, I see his handsome, devilish face, sneering, and triumphing, and scorning me, as if I was a worm in the dirt under his feet.

"My good fellow," he says, "you are a little too late. Hand me that letter, and be off, before I find it necessary to help you. How you got hold of the note I don't know, but I do know it was never given to you to deliver, and that I should be well warranted for kicking you back to your quarters, for your deuced impudence and presumption."

But I held to the letter tight.

"Very well, sir," I answers, respectful, but firm as a rock. "This letter goes back to the house, and before night is over the Captain will have read it himself, and can judge for himself what is best."

I didn't finish, for the next thing I knew was that he strode up to me and grasped hold of me by my collar, and the minute I saw what he meant to do, I felt I had

made a mistake in bringing the letter at all, and in fancying that any appeal could touch or move him. There was a struggle between us, it did not last long; he being strong and lithe, and so much the younger man, gave me no chance; and it were scarcely three seconds before he threw me on the pavement; and leaving me there, a trifle stunned, walked off with the letter in his hand.

I knew things must be pretty bad then. He would never have been so desperate and determined, if he had not meant to do his worst; and when I made my way back, I felt sick with fear. Master Lionel were sitting by the bit of fire in the grate, when I opened the door, and he turns round and looks at me, and changes colour.

"Rabbett," he says, "there is blood on your face."

"Perhaps so, sir," I says. "I've had a fall."

And then I sits down and tells him all about it; about what I had meant to do, and what I had done, and I ends up by asking him what he thinks we had better do, now that my plans had failed.

"Master Lionel," I says, "it would seem a dreadful hard sort of thing to do, if we spoke to the Captain."

He turns quite pale at the thought of it.

"Oh, no," he says, "Rabbett, I wouldn't do it. He would be so angry with Rose, and even with mamma. You remember my telling you what he said before."

I remembered well enough, a pretty hard thing it was to say, even if it had been said in passion, and not half meant. He had threatened to turn Miss Rose out of doors if she spoke to Roscoe again. He must have heard something bad enough to have been so roused.

"Well," I ventures, "what can we do, sir?"

"Watch," says he. "I can think of nothing else to do just yet, Rabbett. I will watch Rose, and you shall watch Roscoe; and if the worst comes, and we must tell papa, we must. I suppose, Rabbett, that Roscoe will try to run away with Rose, as Farquhar ran away with that pretty Miss Lewis?"

"Yes, sir," I answers, "I'm afraid he will. But he is a worse man than Farquhar; and if Miss Rose goes away with him, I am afraid he'll treat her hard enough when he tires of her, as such men as him always tires of young ladies."

"It would be better, Rabbett," says he, fixing his dark eyes solemnly on the fire, "it would be better that Rose should die. I know that."

"I am afraid, sir," says I, "that you are right."

Heaven knows how he had learned to understand, but understand he did, and he were that sad and wise about it, that my very heart ached.

He had seen a old enough side of life, had Master Lionel, living among the set he did, but he were a young gentleman as nothing could spoil. His nature were that fine grained.

We kept our watch faithful all that week and part of the next, but we found out very little, though we had our suspicions—Master Lionel and me—as things was going on pretty badly in a secret way. But at last the very worst thing as could have happened, burst upon us all at once.

I was up at the house one evening, doing something or other for Mrs. Dalgetty, when of a sudden I heard a tremendous loud ring at the door-bell; and going in a hurry to answer it, the Captain himself strode past me into the hall, all in a flame with the wine he had been drinking, and the passion he were in.

I had seen him in towering enough tempers often before, but I had never seen him look as he did then. It was my impression he was pretty near mad; indeed, I thought so then, and have thought so since. How could he have done what he did that night, unless he had not been quite himself?

"Rabbett," says he, "where's Miss Rose?"

"In her own room, sir," says I, wishing with all my heart that I could have told him she were not in.

"Rabbett," says he, "where's Mrs. Dalgetty?"

"In her room, sir," says I—"lying down, a trying to get rid of a headache."

"Then," says he, "go and tell Miss Rose to come down to me at once."

I think I must have looked upset, myself, when I knocked at Miss Rose's door to deliver the Captain's message, for the minute the words were out of my mouth, she turned quite pale and scared-looking, and began to tremble.

"Oh, Rabbett," she says, the tears coming into her great, pretty dark eyes, "is anything the matter? Does he look angry?"

"I must say, miss," I answers, "as he seems a

bit more peppery than common, but I hope it's nothing much."

"Oh, Rabbett," she says, beginning to cry, and wringing her poor little helpless hands, "I know it is something dreadful. I haven't go down. I am so frightened."

But she was obliged to go down, and go down she did, a trembling all over, and out-and-out faint with fear.

She had always been a timid little affectionate creature, and the Captain were pretty hard to face when his temper was up.

I am not ashamed to confess as I stayed as near within hearing distance as I could, without positively eavesdropping. I own up as I had my fears as to what the end of it all would be, knowing the Captain were drove too wild to be wise, or even reasonable, and I wanted to be near enough to see Miss Rose when she came out of the room, and say a comforting word to her, if she seemed to need one.

But she came out of the room in a different manner to what even I had expected.

The minute she went in I heard the sound of Mrs. Dalgetty crying, and the Captain storming, and for a quarter of an hour after the storm fairly raged. The Captain stamped and swore, Mrs. Dalgetty sobbed, and tried to put in a word now and then, but Miss Rose seemed to be too much stunned to speak.

I never heard her voice after the first few moments, and at last the door opened again, and she came running out, her beautiful dark eyes wide open, her innocent face as white as death.

She did not see me, but ran past where I stood, up to her own bed-room, and there was that in her look as brought my heart into my mouth, and, queer as it may seem to you, the first thing I thought of, was Master Lionel.

"There's harm been done," says I to myself—"deadly harm, and no one can undo it but one as loves her, and that she's fond of herself in her girl's way, the one as she needs now, is that there Sno little fellow as was almost like a little lover to her."

And when she come down I feels surer of it than ever; for in three minutes more she did come down, with her hat and jacket on, ready to go out. And her face was even whiter than before; and when she sees me, she holds out her hand, her eyes looking big, and bright with a dangerous sort of shine.

"Good-bye, Rabbett," she says. "I am going."

"Miss Rose," says I, "where are you going to?"

Then she smiles, sad and bitter, and a-bit hard. "Ask papa," she answers. "He ought to know. He sent me away. I don't exactly know myself, unless—unless one person in the world loves me well enough to take me."

"Miss Rose," I breaks out, "for Heaven's sake don't go to Basil Roscoe."

She dragged her hand away from mine, and her eyes flashed fire.

"You all hate him!" she cried; "but I have chosen him before all the world. Papa said I must choose, and I have chosen. I am going to Basil Roscoe."

And before I could speak another word, she had darted out of the door, all on fire, and desperate, as one might say, and was gone.

I knew it would be of no use speaking to the Captain.

Since he had as good as turned the poor innocent creature out of house and home, he was not the one to go to for help.

When he was cooler he would see his mistake, and repent it bitter enough; but just now to go to him, would only make him madder than ever.

Well, just at that very minute, in come Master Lionel. There might have been some sort of a fate in it.

He jumps up them stone steps, two at a time, and bangs at that open front door, clean out of breath, and looking wonderful like his sister, in his excitement.

"Where's Rose gone to, Rabbett?" he says, "I have just seen her walking fast—almost running down the street, and she would not stop for me. What has been the matter?"

I ups and tells him. I weren't afraid of doing it. I knew him to be that there ready, and brave, and affectionate.

"Rabbett," says he, in a jiffy, "come along with me."

"Master Lionel," I asks, "where to?" For, the fact were, my head weren't as clear as his, and I were a bit bothered as to what would be the best thing to be done first.

"I am going to Captain Roscoe's lodgings," he answers, as steady as you please.

It were a queer sort, of course—a queer enough sort, as two a setting out alone: a young gentleman

of eleven years old, and a pretty stiff old soldier a being led by him, to bring back a desperate young creature, as was hurrying on, maybe, to worse than death itself.

But, bless you, I could trust that there little fellow equal, as I have said before, to a commander-in-chief, and I knows he's got that in his boy's heart as would do him credit, and me, too, for the matter of that.

And so, if you'll believe me, off we goes, out into the street, him a keeping step, beautiful as he always did, but not saying a word until at last I speak to him.

"Master Lionel," I says, "what are you thinking about?"

"I am thinking," he answers, his dark eyes shining, "about what I am going to say to Roscoe."

But it weren't so easy to find Roscoe. We did not know exactly where his lodgings were, and so we had to inquire in first one place and then another. The people we fancied could tell us, knew nothing definite when we went to them; and when we got the name of the street, it were hard to find.

But we did find it at last, after a good deal of trouble and a good deal of delay, which was worse. The delay was what upset us, for both of us felt pretty certain that Captain Basil Roscoe would lose very little time in getting Miss Rose away, out of the reach of her friends, if he once found her willing to go with him.

By the time we reached the end of the street where he lived, Master Lionel were that worked up and excited, that he were growing paler and paler, and his eyes were like lanterns in his face, and he caught hold of my hand, and held it hard and fast.

"Rabbett," he says, "what if we should be too late?"

"I can't think such bad luck could happen to us, sir," I answers him back.

And then it were—just at that instant—as his sharp young eyes spied something out ahead of us, for he drew his hand away, and started running, just throwing back a word or so to me.

"There's a carriage before the door," he said, "and they are getting into it."

He were up that street like a deer, and in half a minute I were with him; but when I comes up, all out of breath, he were on the carriage step, holding the door open; and, what's more, holding at bay the black rascal who stood near, sneering and raging at him by turns.

"Rabbett," he cries out, "help me to hold the door open. No—go to the horses' heads. Now, Rose, get out."

I went to the horses' head, as I should have done, if the Captain himself had give the order, instead of "The Captain's Youngest." It made my heart ache, too, to hear the ring in the little chap's voice, so like his father's, and then to remember what the Captain might have been—and what he were. Even the driver were struck all of a heap by his pluck, and were so busy looking at him, that he let me take my stand without a word against it.

"Look here, mate," he says to me. "Here's a rum go!"

"It's bad enough," says I. "Perhaps you'll oblige me with them reins?"

"If you don't get off that step," says Roscoe, saying every word slow, as if he was trying to hold himself back from striking the boy a blow as would kill, "you impudent young hound, I will take the whip from the box there and cut you to pieces!"

Then Miss Rose bends forward. It is my impression as the cruel, murderous sound in the fellow's voice was something she had never heard before, and it frightened her.

"Don't speak to him in that way, Basil," she says. "Oh, Lionel, dear, you shouldn't have come. You must go back. You must, indeed. I shall never come home again, Lionel." And she burst out crying.

"I shall go back, Rose," says the boy; "but you must come with me. Rabbett and I came to fetch you, and we shall not leave you." And then he looks at Roscoe square. "I am not afraid of your cutting me to pieces with your whip, sir," he says. "Rabbett will see to that. But," and the fire blazed up in his voice and his face, and his eyes, as grand as if he had been the Captain himself, "if I had come alone I would not have left this carriage-door unless Rose had come with me. You might have used your whip, but you couldn't have made me do that."

"Am I," says Roscoe, panting with the passion he dare not let out—"am I to throw you into the street under the horses' hoof, you impudent young devil?"

But Master Lionel's back was turned to him. He was pleading with his sister.

"Rose, dear," he says, "come home with me. You will come home with me, I know." And he caught hold of her hand.

Heaven knows how it all happened—I don't. If I had only been quick enough to see in time, the Captain's youngest might have been alive this day—a brave young fellow, such as the Captain had been in those first days in India—a brave, handsome young soldier, as would have been a honour to his country, and a staunch friend yet to me.

But that weren't to be. Just as he stood there, his foot on the carriage step, a holding his sister's hand, the passion in the heart of the rascal watching him broke forth.

He caught him by the shoulder, there were a short struggle as the boy tried to free himself, and before I could reach them, he had whirled him away from the door—with greater force than he intended, I've tried to believe.

The frightened horses lashed out their hoofs and sprang forward, struggling over the child's very body as he lay stunned under their feet.

Scoundrel as he was, I never could make it look square to myself as the man meant the harm he did. His face was out and out deadly, and he leapt forward to save him as quick as I did myself. But we were both too late.

We could only drag at the reins, and step the horses in time to prevent the wheels passing over him—that were all.

We had him out in a minute, and Miss Rose was out of the carriage, kneeling on the pavement by him, and the driver was down off his box.

"Good Heaven!" says Roscoe, "I never meant to do him such a harm. He's dead!" And he shuddered all over, with fear, perhaps, as much as anything else.

But he weren't dead, and he hadn't even fainted, though he were stunned at first. I had lifted him in my arms, and he lay against me, panting a bit, and stone-white, all but for a stain of blood on one temple.

It weren't his head as was so badly hurt, it were his side, where one of the horses had lashed out and struck him.

And as sure as I'm a living man, in a few minutes he opens his eyes and lays hold of his sister's hand. "Rose," he says, "will you—go home—with me—now?"

She knelt over him, wringing her hands, and sobbing as if her heart would break. She would not let her lover come near her. When he tried to speak she shrank away, shuddering.

It's my belief as what she had seen in his face during the last ten minutes would have like her faith in him, even if the young master had met no hurt. And now she were that terrified, that she were as helpless as a child.

"Is he much hurt?" she kept saying. "Rabbett! Oh, Rabbett! let me take him home to mamma. Put him into the carriage." And then she turned upon Roscoe fierce and wild. "Go away," she cried out. "You have killed him! Go away, and never let me see you again!"

There were a dreadful house when we took him home. Mrs. Dalgetty went out of one faint into another, as she always did when she were frightened.

The servants ran backward and forward doing nothing, the children crowded round us crying, and the Captain looked on at all we did like a man in a dream.

I don't want to say nothing hard, but I can't help remembering that not one of them seemed to be touched so keen, that they could forget their own feelings in trying to help him in his pain. But perhaps it were only their excitable way, and not so much a bit of selfish thoughtlessness, as it seemed to me then.

He were hurt, and bruised, and broken that bad—poor little fellow—that when the doctor came, and were beginning to go to work on him, he looks up at me with his bright, troubled eye, and says to me:

"Rabbett, please take hold of my hand."

I were that near breaking down and sobbing out loud, that I were ashamed of myself. It were a comfort to me, in many a day after, to think I had took hold of his hand, and that he had asked me to do it.

And when the hard job was over, the doctor put his hands into his coat-pockets, and stands looking at him for a minute or so, and then he turns to me and beckons me out of the room.

"Where is the Captain?" he asks me.

"In the parlour, sir," I answers, feeling a queer sort of wish as I could have said different. "He didn't feel equal to seeing the operation performed."

"And Mrs. Dalgetty?"

"Mrs. Dalgetty, sir," says I, quite going into a

huskiness, "is in her room. She fainted as soon as she heard the news."

"Ah!" says he, and then looks at me sharp for a while.

"Sir," I ventured to say, "Master Lionel—will he—?" But I couldn't finish somehow. I meant to say, "Will he get over it?"

"No," says he. "I am very sorry to say it; but he will not."

Will you believe me as the words struck me like a slung-shot. Not having no fatality of my own, and never having clung to nothing on earth as I had clung to that there generous, neglected little fellow, just at that minute I felt as if I'd got a blow as was too hard to stand up against. I couldn't face it straight.

When I had been lonely on my way, he had been lonely on his, and we had been a help and a comfort to each other in ways as outsiders never understood.

"Sir," I puts it to him, quite hoarse when I gets my voice back, "when—?" And I couldn't finish that question neither.

"Well," he answers me back, "I am afraid, before morning."

I went back to the room and stayed there all night.

The Captain, hearing from the doctor how things was going to turn out, was anxious enough to wait up, and looked broke down and shook. Miss Rose and Mrs. Dalgetty came into the room, too.

But it had all been so sudden, and the child seemed so like himself, but for a bit of a pinched look and the paleness, that nobody appeared quite so believe as he was so near gone.

I am sure the Captain and Mrs. Dalgetty did not, until the very last.

I've often thought, too, as he did not quite know himself, and I must say as I were scarcely sorry. He were only a child, and he might have been startled and troubled a bit, as older people than him have been often enough, when they found themselves facing death, all in a moment, as one might say.

It seemed a strange sort of thing, that at the very last, him and me was together alone, as we always had seemed to be.

He had coaxed Miss Rose to go to bed; he would not rest until she went; and when she bent down to kiss him, he says to her, in a whisper, quite bright and cheerful:

"Don't cry, Rosa. It's all right."

And then the Captain gets tired, and begins to doze, and Mrs. Dalgetty falls asleep on the sofa; and as Master Lionel and me was left together, me watching him, and listening to the clock ticking; him lying quiet, with his eyes shut.

But towards daybreak he gets a bit restless, and stirs, and the next thing, I sees him looking at me, quite wide awake.

"Rabbett," says he, in a bit of a hurry, "open the window."

And when I goes and does it, and comes back, he puts outs out his hand.

"Rabbett," he says, "I'm very fond of you;" and something wistful comes into his eyes, and I sees a faint-gray shadow creeping up over his face. "I was always fond of you, and I always shall be fond of you," says he. "Don't let my hand go, Rabbett." And the next minute the gray shadow has changed his brave, handsome, childish face all at once and altogether.

He gives me a innocent, bright look—just one, as if he were wondering why I shook so—and shuts his eyes.

He would never open them again on me, as was so fond and proud of him in my poor way. When they opened again, he would see something brighter than the morning sky, as was just growing red and golden before the east window.

Of course they all fretted after him for awhile, finding out, most likely, as he'd made himself dearer to them than they'd thought before he were gone. They could not have helped missing him, if they had been more careless than they were.

Sometimes I fancied as the Captain was checked a bit, and were sad, and a trifle remorseful, in secret, but his days of being open and soft-hearted was over, and it were hard to tell.

I know it were a long time before he forgave Miss Rose, though for her sake the matter was hushed up, and no one but themselves knew exactly how the accident happened.

Miss Rose could never bear the sound of Basil Roscoe's name again, and she married a good man a few years after and made him a good wife. So the little fellow as lost his life through his love for her, was not sacrificed in vain; and I am sure she remembered him, and grieved over him far longer than the rest did.

But he was only a boy, only a child, to them; they didn't know him as I did. And so, after a month or so, their grief died out, and in a year or so he was half forgotten.

But it weren't so easy for me, you see. I couldn't forget. His face and his pleasant ways is as clear to me to-day as they ever was. When I sit lonely over my fire—being a lonely man—I think of him for hours, in a way of my own, and make a sort of dream of him.

I think of him as he was when we made friends, when he were a week old. I think of him as he was when he began to find out as he might be confidential. I think about him as he was when he told me of his sister's lover. I think of him a lying there, with the light from the east window falling on his face, and hear him saying:

"I always shall be fond of you. Don't let my hand go, Rabbett."

And then I makes up a picture of what might have been. I sees him grown into a young man, good, and handsome, and brave. I makes a picture of his young wife, and tells myself how tender and loving he would have treated her. I have even pictured little children as was like him, and was fond of me as he had been; and I've made myself a sort of home among them in my old age, until I forgot the world altogether.

And when I roused myself, I choked up, with something as might almost be my heart in my throat, to think as it were only fancy after all; and the Captain's youngest lay out under the stars in the church-yard, the wind blowing over the grass and daisies as grows on the green mound, as is only the grave of a child.

F. G. B.

FACETIÆ.

"NOT HIS WORK."

PAMPERED MENIAL: "Well, suppose there is snow about; H! didn't put it there; might as well hark me to take the hicc off the Sappentine." —Fun.

ANTICIPATION.

A WIFE lay in a dying condition: Having brought up a clever orphan girl, who was grown, the dying woman called the young woman to her, and said:

"I will soon leave you my little children motherless. They know you and love you, and after I am gone I want you and my husband to marry."

The young woman, deeply affected, burst into tears, and said:

"We were just talking about that."

APOLOGISING.

A GENTLEMAN returning the other night from a convivial party was so inebriated that he thundered away at a neighbour's door, mistaking it for his own domicile. The neighbour, good-Samaritan-like, and fearing the gentleman might be "run in," generously slipped on his clothes and saw the diner out safely home. An hour after another rat-a-tat was heard at the door, and on being awakened from his second sleep, and poking his head out of the window to ascertain the cause, the neighbour found to his surprise his old acquaintance:

"Now, what is it? I thought you were snug in bed by this time."

"No, no, sir, I could not rest," exclaimed the gentleman below, "without coming to apologise."

FIRST PRIVATE.

SOME little while ago, at a bar conclave at a Southern hotel, generals, majors, &c., were each with much declamation giving an account of an incident of the war. A quiet man stood by, and at last said:

"Gentlemen, I happened to be there, and perhaps might be able to refresh your memories as to what took place."

And he gave, succinctly and inoffensively, an exact detail of a smart action. The hotel-keeper said to him:

"Sir, what might have been your rank?"

"I was a private," was the reply.

The next day the quiet man, as he was about to depart, asked for his bill.

"Not a cent, sir, not a cent," answered the proprietor. "You are the very first private I ever met."

LET Turks delight to howl and fight, for 'tis their nature to; Let Bear and Lion growl and bite, for madness made them so. But Englishmen, you should never let your angry passions rise, don't quarrel; trade, work hard, lie low, and forward the supplies.

A GENTLEMAN passing up Regent's Park was accosted by a man, evidently from the north, who was anxious to know the way to the "Theological Gardens."

At Werthing on Sunday, a curate read the prayer for rain—perhaps it was by mistake—instead of the for fine weather, or else they are very dry there after Christmas doings.

A COMPREHENSIVE school inspector asked an Aberdeen class if any one could tell him anything remarkable in the life of Moses P. Boys: "Yes, sir, he was the only man who broke all the commandments at once!"

A SINGULAR accident has just happened in one of the busy cities of the north, where the novelty of the tramcar has hardly worn off. While a clergyman was exercising his legs as rapidly as possible, in an effort to overtake a passing car, and when success was about to crown his efforts, a crowd of corner men set up the cry, "Stop thief!" "Stop thief!" These cries excited the pedestrians, and readily they joined in the chase. A policeman, remarkably active for one of his "profession," thought he saw an opportunity to distinguish himself, and at once hotly pursued, and presently overtook, the flying clergyman. The preacher was brought up short, and instantly surrounded by a throng, who demanded him to surrender the stolen property. With mingled astonishment and indignation he protested his innocence, and declared he was simply trying to catch the car. The story was at first pronounced transparent, but by and by a man came along who knew the minister, and that ended the farce.

WEARY WAITING.

("Man never is, but always to be blest.")

A maiden sat in her bower so bright,

Deeming the days were "awful slow;"

She pined for morning, she pined for night,

Awaiting the coming of him, you know!

She'd plenty of money and lands galore,

And might have been happy the livelong

day,

But one thing she constantly asked for

more,—

And there she was, wishing her life away.

A soldier went on his way through life,

Bold and gallant and good was he,

He never said no when the word was strife—

He thought it was all in his work maybe!

But somehow or other his life was sad,

He waited and watched for a thing called

pay;

Although he'd much fighting he never was

glad,

And there he was, wishing his life away!

A doctor sat in his dainty room,

Taking his fees—as a doctor can.

He took the guineas, gave out the doom,

And the world believed him a wondrous

man.

But even he was inclined to pout—

Desire for honours had turned him gray—

The order for knighting him never came

out,—

And there he was, wishing his life away.

And thus as we worry our way on earth,

'Tis ever the same old story still—

One man has the honours, another the worth,

And no one has always his own sweet

will!

We fix our desires on the topmost round,

Fame's ladder is steep and we can't all

stay;

We look for success and it seldom is found,—

And there we are, wishing our lives away.

—Fun.

LA MODE ILLUSTRÉE.

FOND MOTHER: "Why, what is the matter with my darling? Nurse tells me you don't want to get up yet; has your last night's gaiety made you ill, pet?"

PET (who has been to a child's dance the night before): "Oh, no! not at all, mamma dear, but it's the proper thing; every lady lies in bed late after a ball!"

—Judy.

ONE FOR LITTLE PICKLETON.

MISS STYLAS (who has been to town, in service, and has returned for a short holiday): "So little Pickleton stands where it did, Mr. Giles?"

LOCAL GARDNER (naturally nettled): "Well, yes, miss, we ain't had no particular occasion to move it since you've been away!"

Judy.

TALL TALK.

SHORT RUSTIC: "Whoi, Jim, how you've growed, sure-ly!"

JIM: "Think so?"

SHORT RUSTIC: "Sure on't. Now I never growed arter I was sixteen. But then, ye know, I shot up—like a hop!"

—Judy.

SAD TOOTH-INK OF.

THE Sultan's toothache is said to have got better immediately on the break-up of the Conference and the departure of the delegates. His Majesty's malady was caused by nervous anxiety as to the payment of incidental expenses. —Judy.

WHAT the Porte wished the Ambassadors—Many happy returns. —Judy.

RUSSIA'S Sum of Happiness—Addition. —Judy.

WOMAN'S FORTÉ.—The Piano. —Judy.

UNDERWRITERS.—Office stools. —Judy.

ON HIS DIGNITY.

MAIDEN AUNT: "Who was that nasty little boy who just spoke to you, Johnny? And what did he say?"

JOHNNY (indignant): "He's not a little boy—he's an old schoolfellow o' mine—'great hunting man! He said you was a pretty gal, and I was a sly daug! And look here!—if you keep calling me 'Johnny,' I won't take you out any more!" —Punch.

SPECULATION.

FIRST CITY MAN: "Dropped upon anything good lately, Brown?"

SECOND DITO: "Well, I've insured in the 'Accidental,' and taken twenty wink tickets, and bought a bicycle!" —Punch.

"FREE TO CONFESS."—A pronounced Ritualist. —Punch.

RITUALIST HEAD-QUARTERS.—Peter-sham. —Punch.

THE NEW FORM OF CATTLE-PLAGUE (from a Butcher's point of view).—American beef. —Punch.

BAR SILVER.

WHEN you're tipping an Eton boy, or the head keeper at a great battue house. —Punch.

FIRST IMPRESSIONS.

CHARLIE (after staring at the surprised choir for a long time in silent wonder): "Mamma!"

MAMMA: "Well, dear."

CHARLIE: "Are those all angels in the white pinafores?" —Fun.

BYE CHURCH LAW.

MRS. PRALAMOP says, "it's allus the way with them here religious parties when they squabble. They all allus have a High for a High and a Tooth for a Tooth." If she's right we trust the coming one will be a wisdom Tooth. —Fun.

AN A-PREEL.

TWENTY-FIVE serious accidents and ten deaths have been recently chronicled, all of them owing to orange peel on pavements. As, just at present, our police confine themselves to assaulting "civilians," and hiding themselves, they might be employed to keep the streets clear of this danger to life and limb. They might be useful orange Peelers if nothing else. —Fun.

STATISTICS.

CHRISTMAS BEEF.—Statistics published in the Scotch papers illustrate the extent to which London is dependent on the North of Scotland for its Christmas beef. Not less than £30,000 worth of fat cattle left Aberdeen alone on Thursday, December 7, for the Metropolitan Christmas market, held that week, and a further supply, valued at about £10,000, was forwarded on December 8. The stock sent south on Thursday numbered 900 prime animals, and were conveyed by five special trains in about 150 trucks. In addition to this enormous consignment, upwards of 350 head were sent from Inverness and Ross shires by the Highland Railway on Thursday, and the same line was to carry about 250 animals from stations in Morayshire on the 8th. This makes a total of about 1,500 head, and, averaging each animal at £32, represents about £48,000 sterling.

THE FASHIONABLE PURVEYOR.—Twenty years ago it was calculated that during the season the population of London consumed 125,000 partridges, 70,000 pheasants, and 80,000 snipe, as well as about 800,000 miscellaneous wild birds, such as woodcock, black-game, and plovers. Now these figures ought at least to be doubled. The number of grouse consumed in London is set down at 300,000. It will be seen that without the battue and the fashionable purveyor, this could not be done.

THE Paris Mint is coining several millions of francs in gold, bearing the effigy of the King of Greece. The entire sum ordered is to be delivered within a month.

ADELPHI THEATRE.

THE remodelling of the programme at this theatre deserves notice. The "children's pantomime," "Little Goody Two Shoes," properly so-called from its being performed by bright, intelligent, and pretty children, has been, after six weeks successful run at morning performances, transferred to the evening bill. It now precedes "The Shaughraun," displacing "Mr. and Mrs. White" and "Bamboozling," and filling up a full evening's entertainment. The cleverness of the two little Grattans, Harry and Emilie, with the brilliant Lilliputian company of actors and pantomimists supporting them, received a full measure of applause on Saturday night from a crowded auditory. A Master Laurie, as clown, displayed wonderful grotesqueness, grace and activity, and a double barlequinade and a new comic scene are added. Mr. Chatterton has assembled a juvenile company, so trained by the experience of Mr. John Cormack, that they must succeed wherever they appear.

A WOMAN'S PENANCE.

Once on a time, a woman sore oppressed
By sense of sinning, her great crimes confessed

To faithful Buddha, saying she resolved
To sin no more if once the priest absolved.

"Your sin, my daughter?" asked the pious man,

"I absolution grant to all I can;
Your heart unfolded, each secret thought reveal,
And nought of sin, my daughter, there conceal."

"Master," she said, "in me is no deceit,
But all I hear my tongue must fain repeat.
I tell to one, and she confides in two,
Unheeding if the tale be false or true.

You said, good teacher, in your sacred word,
Unspoken scandal never could be heard.
I would atone, with all my soul I long
To cure the fault, and to repair each wrong."

A moment's silence, then the teacher spoke,
As he a thistle-top from its stem broke:
"Scatter the ripe seed: do your very best,
To let them fall in north, south, east and west."

So light a penance she could well obey;
But half in wondering, went she on her way.

Her task completed, "Go now," the command,
"Gather each small seed scattered by your hand."

"Master," she pleaded, "give me lighter task,
I have not skill to do what you ask.
In many places where I scattered seed
I find, oh, master, but a prickly weed."

M. E. L.

GEMS.

LAY by a good store of patience but be sure and put it where you can find it.

Anguish of mind has driven thousands to suicide; anguish of body, none. This proves, that the health of the mind is of far more consequence than the health of the body, although both are deserving of much more attention than either of them receive.

TRUTH.—Heaven forbid that the search after truth should be discouraged for fear of its consequences! The consequences of truth may be subversive of systems of superstition, but they never can be injurious to the rights of well-founded expectations of the human race.

The best dowry to advance the marriage of a young lady is when she has in her countenance mildness, in her speech wisdom, in her behaviour modesty, and in her life virtue.

Proper conduct, and not fine words, does honour to virtue.

Admit no guest into your soul that the faithful watch-dog in your bosom barks at.

Strong passions work wonders when there is a greater strength of reason to curb them.

HOUSEHOLD TREASURES.

ORANGE PUDDING.—Wash the salt out of half a pound of butter, mix it with the same quantity of powdered sugar and a wine-glass of brandy; grate the rind of three large oranges, and squeeze out the juice; beat six fresh eggs, stir them into the butter and sugar, then add the prepared orange; lay a puff paste around the pudding-dish, and bake from half to three-quarters of an hour, eat cold with sugar. Lemons may be used the same way.

LEMON GUSTARD.—Beat the yolks of eight eggs with half a pound of sugar; add a pint of boiling water, rinds of two lemons, grated, and juice of same; boil until it thickens, and then add a large wine-glass of white wine and half a glass of brandy; boil a few minutes, and strain into glasses; eaten when very cold.

CLAM FRITTERS.—Twenty five clams, chopped fine; add to these a batter made with a half-pint of the clam-liquor, a heaping pint of flour, and two eggs well beaten, soda, about the size of a pea, dissolved in water; fry in hot lard.

WELSH RABBIT.—Cut a piece of bread about six by three inches; take off all the crust, toast it and butter it on one side; cut a slice of thick cheese of the thickness of the bread and sufficient to cover the bread; place it before a clear fire at an angle of forty-five degrees, where it will toast briskly.

CAKE ALMOST AS GOOD AS POUND CAKE.—Between half and three-fourths of a cupful of butter, a cupful of white sugar, a cupful and a half of flour, four eggs, yolks and whites beaten separately, a tablespoonful of sweet milk, a teaspoonful and a half of baking powder; lemon.

FOR destroying that noisy visitant of the household, the cricket, there are several methods. If saucers, with the grounds of tea or beer in them, be dispersed about the floor where they usually appear, they will be found dead the following morning. Scotch snuff will also have the effect of driving them away.

MISCELLANEOUS.

WRITING.—By all business people a plain, legible style of writing is most valued. Therefore, those who would write well should follow these rules: Write your own "hand." Improve it as you will but keep it your own. Write plainly, forming every letter, and especially take pains to make all proper nouns, or unusual words, very legible. Write as uniformly as possible, and especially when writing your name or signature. Avoid all flourishes. On the ability to follow these simple rules may rest the chance of obtaining a situation. To those who are writing for the press, or aspire to do so, we have simply to say that they often fail to gain a hearing on account of the "bad copy" they present. Manuscript should be written plainly. If writers only knew the immense trouble that illegible copy gives to editors and compositors, they would endeavour to write more plainly. Every word should be written distinctly, so that there shall be no need for guess work on the part of the person who is to read it.

HERMITS.—These misguided people, who in former ages were so numerous, are, in some few instances, reproduced in our own day. A Connecticut hermit is said to be living with a little property of ten thousand dollars for company. The story of the Roxbury hermit, an Englishman of distinguished family, who went to America thirty years ago on a naturalists' errand for a society in England, has been made familiar to all within a few months. There was a Pennsylvania hermit lately discovered by his brother in Connecticut, having been lost to all knowledge of his relations for forty years. A German underground hermit was not long since unearthed on Long Island by a party of hunters. There is a secret in this sort of life, showing that the mind has lost its balance, or become too intense in certain of its faculties. Nature is a grand balm for those souls who feel hurt by society. Her solitudes and silence calm and steady the tossing thoughts, and permit no more disturbances. It is not probable that this very common desire to be alone will ever be entirely eradicated from the human heart.

THE rifle ranges at Milton, near Gravesend, for many years past in use by the troops at this garrison, are, for the present, closed, and all firing prohibited, in consequence of a dispute having arisen between the War Department and the owners of the adjacent land, who complain of the great injury occasioned by the balls fired by the troops killing and maiming so many of the sheep and cattle.

